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in sink

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matt and libby elliott

holistic approach / great exits / lovely lavs /
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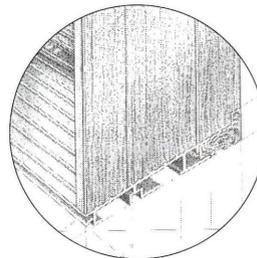
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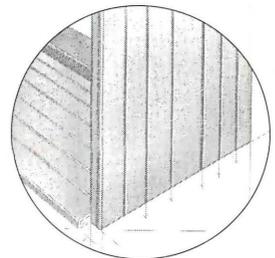


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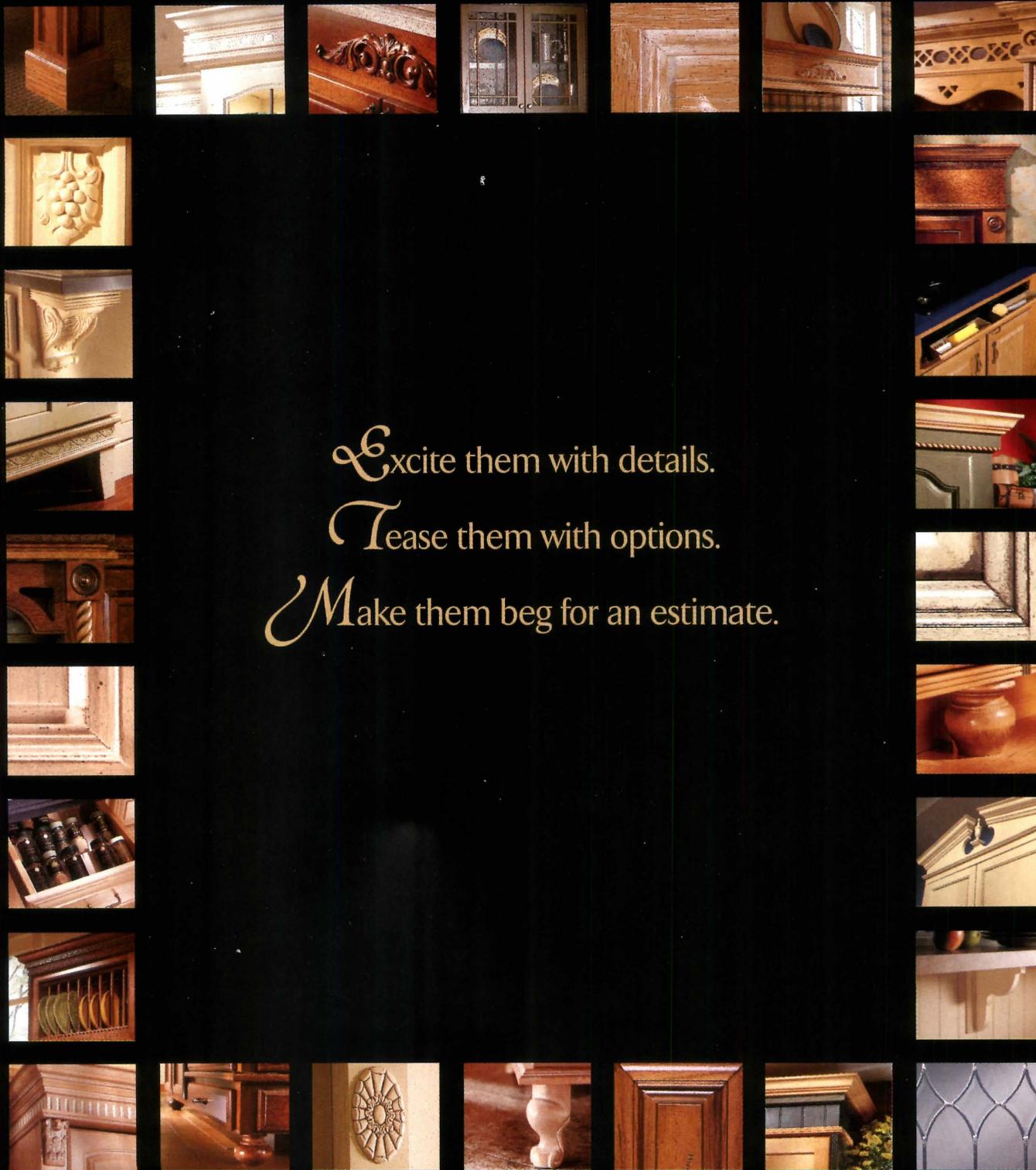
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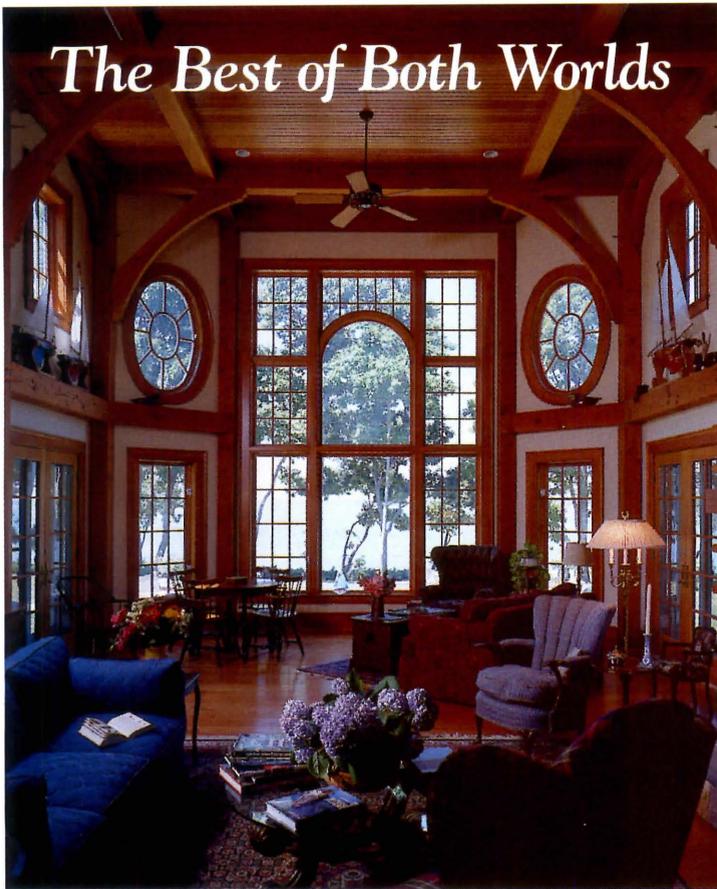
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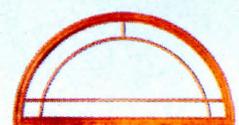
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from the editor

the not so ugly house

we need fresh ideas for big-house design.

by s. claire conroy

As I write this, I've just returned from the National Association of Home Builders' annual trade show and conference. Held in Atlanta, the International Builders' Show drew an estimated 75,000 of the best and the brightest professionals in the housing industry—one of the largest three industries in the United States. By most measures, it was one of the most successful home-building conventions since the '80s. So, why did I come back with a little dark cloud over my head?

Sigh. I just wish the houses were prettier.

boom boxes

This jamboree came on the heels of some of the best years ever—for builders and architects. Much of the good fortune happened at the high end: house sizes ballooned and options lists swelled, as many buyers paid cash at closing. With all this money floating around, you'd think the houses would look better. They don't.

At first, I despaired. If we can't pull off decent-looking houses in boom times, how on earth can we do it in leaner years? Then I had a little epiphany: The problem isn't not enough money for

good design; the problem is too much money. Despite Sarah Susanka's plea in her book *The Not So Big House*, houses are still getting bigger. Even empty nesters and retirees are trading up in square footage and home price, contrary to all predictions. And the bigger and more expensive the house, the uglier it tends to be. This is true not only for production housing, but for most high-end custom housing, as well.

It's easy and fashionable to blame builders for these egregious McMansions. Certainly part of the problem is their so-called "value engineering," where builders knock as much money out of the design as they can, while delivering such customer favorites as big rooms, fancy appliances, and sumptuous bathrooms.

But the embarrassing truth is that residential architects are also to blame. For high-end homes, most builders hire architects or buy house plans designed by architects. Yes, in many cases, architects designed those McMansions.

How could that be?

biltmore and more and more

First of all, large houses are much more difficult to



Photo: Katherine Lambert

design than smaller ones, even if you have a vast budget at your disposal. Where most go astray is in trying to mitigate size by adding detail—projecting volumes, changing roof lines, piling on the whole window catalog. Quite a few 1920s robber barons ended up with rococo monstrosities after their architects borrowed big-house details from Europe's palaces.

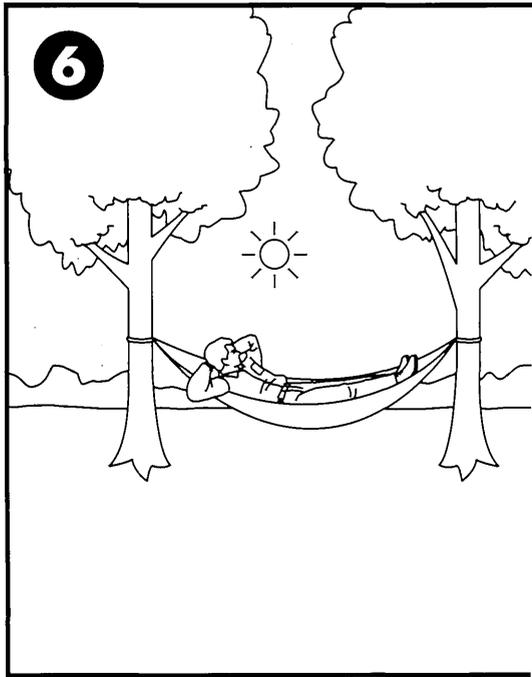
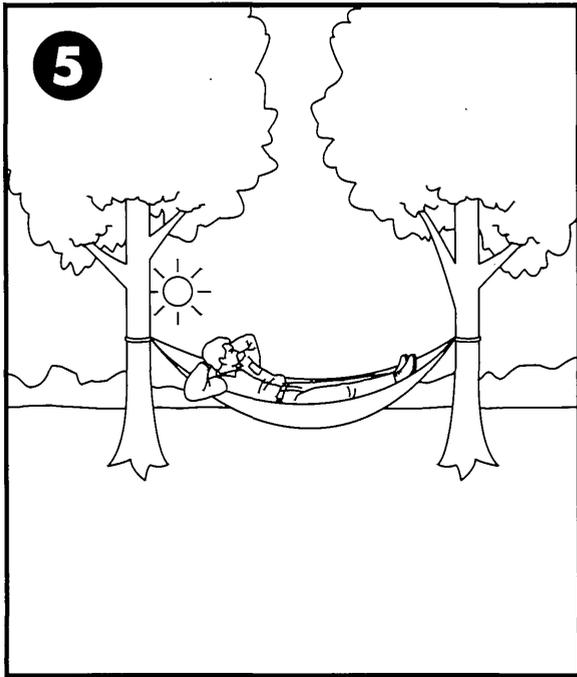
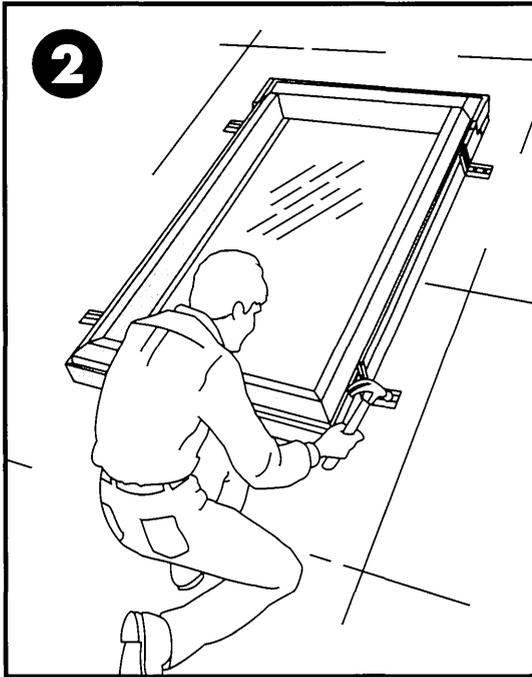
In the merchant-housing realm, we simply have no stylistic antecedents for the really big house. Hence, architects have again borrowed from palaces—Mizner's Palm Beach mansions, McKim Mead & White's sprawling Shingle houses and their appended Colonial Revivals. Trouble is, the styles are watered

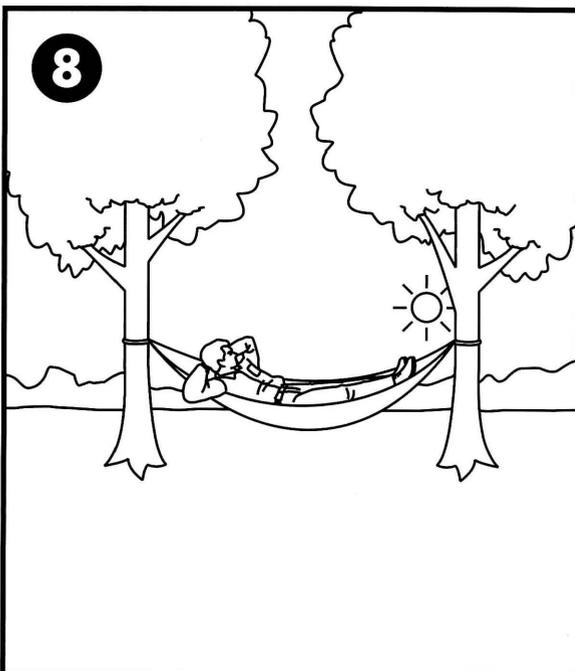
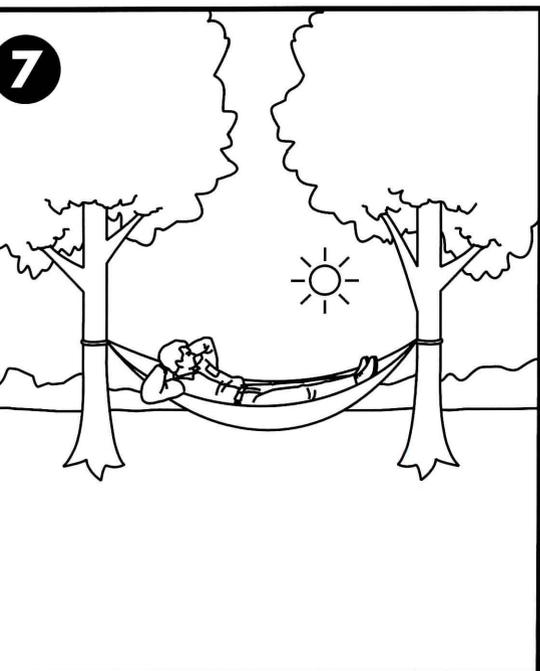
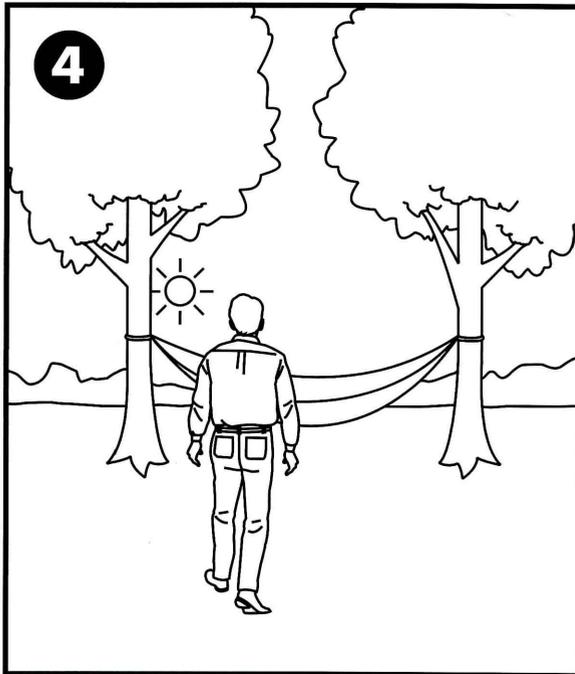
down to meet builders' profit margins, smaller lot sizes, and contemporary tastes in floor plans. During that watering down process, all sorts of errors in proportion occur. After all, how many McKim Mead & Whites are there?

And that's the real problem: Builders are building and architects are designing beyond their ability to deliver. The big-house-on-a-budget is here to stay. We need some better ideas about how to do it right. **ra**

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

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letters

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all wet

There appears to be a problematic detail in an illustration for one of last year's Hands On columns (March 2000, page 94; illustration reprinted at right). If the vapor barrier is on the house's exterior, then warm moist interior air would condense within the batt insulation, making it ineffective.

Lanny Lerner
Miller + Lerner Architects
Scarsdale, N.Y.

Contributing editor Rick

Vitullo replies: You are indeed correct that a vapor barrier does not belong on the exterior side of batt insulation. The correct label should read "moisture barrier" or "building paper" on the detail for the wall, not "vapor barrier." As you have pointed out, in a cool climate the vapor barrier belongs on the warm side (the inside) of a wall, where it prevents interior moisture from entering and then condensing inside the insulation. A moisture barrier, on the other hand, belongs near the outside of the wall construction, where it can help prevent water from entering the wall from the outside while still allowing vapor to escape from inside.

local talent

As a small to medium-sized architectural firm in Ohio, we have found a niche providing single- and multifamily residential design and construction services. In response to the market forces noted in your article "Going Local" (January 2000, page 40), we have developed a quick and economical way to produce site-specific home plans from a builder's portfolio of homes. We currently provide this service for a few larger builders in our area and produce these plans for a six-state region in an average turnaround time of three days per set of plans.

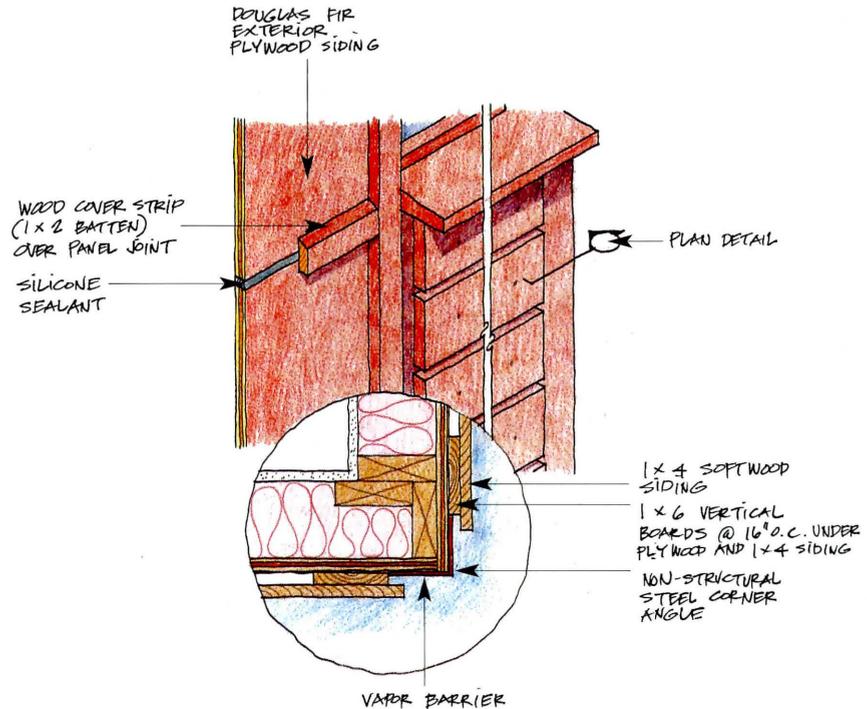
And we aren't talking about plain vanilla plans, either. Full basement, crawl or slab foundation variations, three-car side-entry garage options, alternate "bonus" rooms, brick wrap variations, family and master bedroom extensions, even full-blown alternate second-floor Jack-and-Jill configurations are things we deal with regularly.

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require a full-blown set of documents that accurately depicts the exact home, including all the options and other variations that the customer has ordered.

We agree with Mr. Stein's comment that "You can't put out a very basic set of plans anymore." Our "builder" plans have to be as good today as most "custom" home plans from years past. And that keeps those past construction nightmares to a minimum, too. It gets a lot easier if you can say, "If it's not on the plans, don't build it."

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home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design

baltimore buzz

you can't open a newspaper these days without reading about the revitalization of America's downtowns. Plenty of today's affluent young professionals and empty nesters want to live in cities, and architects who used to do mostly suburban work are

boldly venturing into urban territory.

Baltimore architect Rebecca Swanston, AIA, anticipated this trend early. In 1984, she purchased a series of old warehouses on an alley street in Baltimore's Federal Hill neighborhood. Acting as architect, developer, and contractor, she renovated them into six attached townhouses. "This was my first project on my own as an architect," she says. "I guess I was pretty young to be taking on the risk, but I never do things in a small way."



Bill Lyons

Swanston transformed the former warehouses into dynamic containers of space and light—one of which is her own unit (above).

The alley setting freed her from having to face the city's historic preservation board, allowing her to design more contemporary homes. But the Baltimore real estate market of the mid-80s favored traditional styles, and Swanston had a hard time marketing the units. She hung in there, living in one of the homes and eventually selling the five others to buyers ranging from singles and young families to a retired couple.



Architect Rebecca Swanston was years ahead of her time when she designed, developed, and built this block of European-inspired row houses in Baltimore.

Little by little, things turned around. Through tax credits and financing programs, the city's government began encouraging home buyers to purchase and renovate its aging housing stock. Baltimore's reputation as an affordable place to buy a home or start a business grew, and Federal Hill became a highly desirable area. Three years ago, Swanston sold her unit and used the profit she'd



Bill Lyons

made on it to buy another, larger town home in the project. She renovated it again, using the ideas and knowledge she'd gained during her 15-plus years of practicing architecture. The town home (left) makes an ideal nest for Swanston, her husband, and their two teenage children; her firm now focuses on custom infill and single-family work in and around Baltimore.—*meghan drueding*

boston wingding

d evoting time and creativity to a good cause is hardly for the birds—though it can be, as a flock of

Boston-area architects demonstrated recently. The diverse group, including teams from Metcalf & Eddy, Next Phase Studios, and Thompson & Rose Architects, created 29 one-of-a-kind birdhouses that were auctioned off as part of a fund-raising dinner for Shelter Inc., a private nonprofit that works with area homeless families.

The unique designs ranged from simple nesting boxes to a multifamily apartment complex to a passive-solar dwelling complete with guest house. The Fallingwater replica shown here, designed by Steve Banford, Rick Robinson, and Siobhan McAuley of Margulies & Associates, was constructed around a working waterfall.

The auction was arranged by Margulies & Associates' Marc Margulies, AIA, who also contributed a piece inspired by Palladio's Villa Rotunda. In all, the dinner raised more than \$250,000—\$34,000 of it from birdhouse sales.—*katy tomasulo*



Courtesy Siobhan McAuley

This Fallingwater replica has no doubt supplied its owners with plenty of cheep trills.

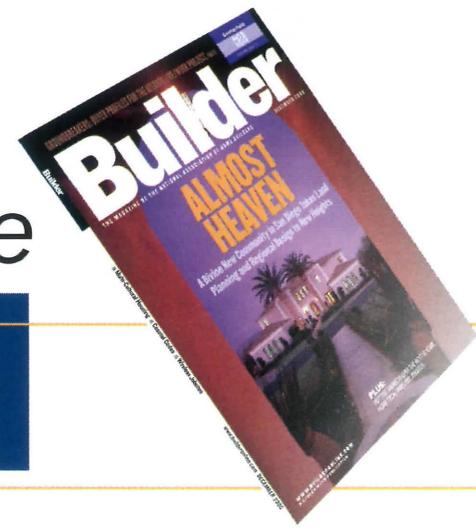
big dreams

americans are dreaming of bigger, brighter, more luxurious bathrooms. That's one of the findings of a recent telephone survey of 600 homeowners conducted by Piscataway, N.J.-based American Standard. When asked what one thing they would change about their current bathroom, a hefty 40 percent of the respondents chose "make it bigger" and another 20 percent opted for adding a separate shower and whirlpool. And when asked to cite the single most important bathroom fixture in an ideal bathroom, 44 percent of homeowners cited a whirlpool tub, 20 percent a complete shower system, and 9 percent a double-sink vanity. The survey also invited respondents to rank a list of "accessories"; skylights, heated tile floors, and stereo systems rated most popular.—*nigel f. maynard*



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luis barragán: the quiet revolution

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This comprehensive retrospective of the Pritzker Prize-winning architect's work was organized by the Vitra Design Museum and will be touring all over the world. It includes original documents from the Barragán Foundation's archives, along with plans, sketches, photographs (like the one shown here of a residence in Mexico City), and models. For more information, call 212.539.1900.



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out of order: mapping social spaces

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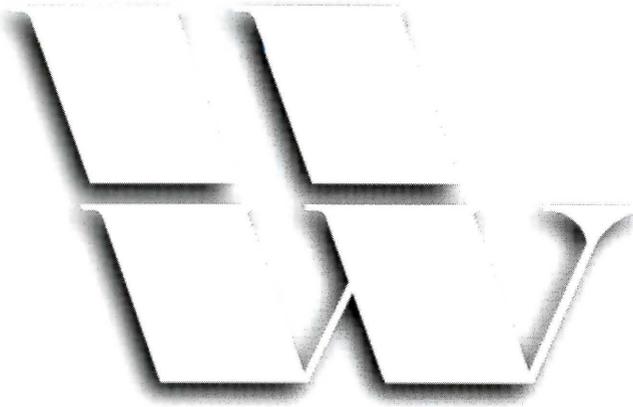
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Expected to draw more than 15,000 industry professionals, the AIA convention allows architects to view new products and earn learning units. The theme for this year's event is "Leaders and Partners in Creating Community." For more information, call 202.626.7395 or visit www.aiaconvention2001.com.



continuing exhibits

The Opulent Eye of Alexander Girard, through March 18, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, 212.849.8400; **A Century of Design, Part 3: 1950–1975**, through April 1, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 212.535.7710; **Shaping the Great City: Modern Architecture in Central Europe**, through May 6, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 310.440.7300; **The Architecture of R.M. Schindler**, through June 3, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 213.621.2766.



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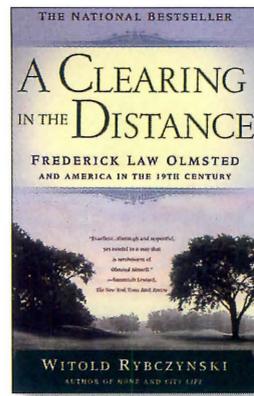
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a lush life

We know Frederick Law Olmsted for his grand landscape designs: Central Park, Prospect Park, and Biltmore, to name a few. Witold Rybczynski's *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the Nineteenth Century* offers an entirely new perspective on the nineteenth century's most celebrated landscape architect.

Rybczynski devotes fully one-third of this superbly researched biography to Olmsted's early years, and it's a fascinating read. After a youth spent shuttling among schools around his hometown of Hartford, Conn., the young Olmsted skipped college and dabbled in dry goods, farming, travel journalism, and publishing. It wasn't until he was 35 that a chance conversation led to his installation as superintendent of Central Park. He was not yet known as a landscape architect; the appointment was largely political. And contrary to popular belief, he was hired not to design the new park, but



A Clearing in the Distance. Witold Rybczynski. 480 pp. New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster. 2000. \$15 (paperback). 212.698.7000.

to manage its construction work force. He then entered a public competition for the park's design and won, in collaboration with English architect Calvert Vaux. Vaux remained his business partner for the next 15 years. Together, they produced much of the work for which Olmsted is credited today.

Rybczynski does a comprehensive job of describing the genesis and execution of each Olmsted commission. He is equally thorough in exploring Olmsted's personal relationships with family and friends, his precarious health, and sad decline in old age. It is this intimate perspective that brings Frederick Law Olmsted to life in *A Clearing in the Distance*.—susan bradford barror

Concrete isn't for everyone, but the owners of this Seattle home were willing to take risks. Ed Weinstein, FAIA, tempered the material's industrial look with warm mahogany trim. Project architects were John Eggleston, AIA, and Alan Farkus, AIA.



Michael Ian Shopenn

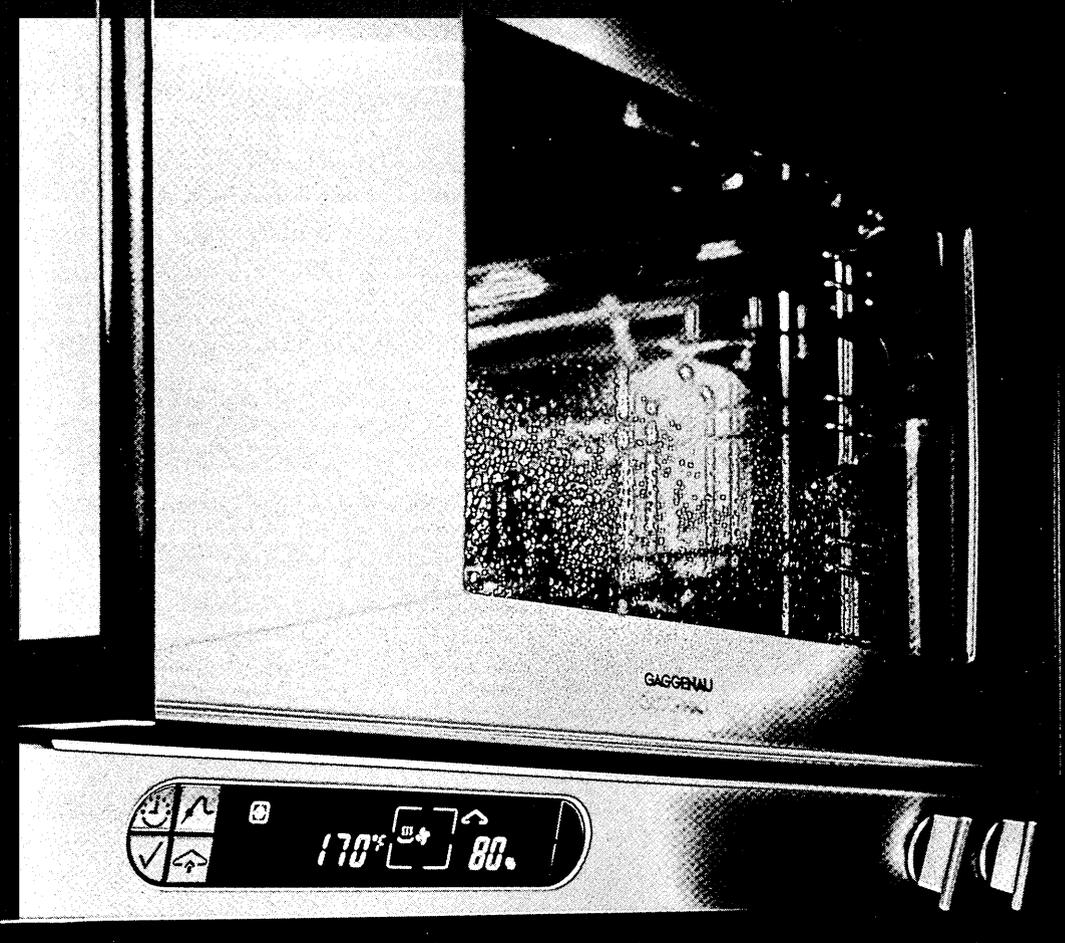
concrete example

Ed Weinstein's clients for this Seattle compound weren't afraid of a little concrete. They'd lived previously in Modern-architecture-rich Columbus, Ind., and wanted to weave the influences of the Pacific Northwest and Japan into their new home. "We knew we wanted to use some kind of elemental material for the walls," says Weinstein, a principal of Weinstein Copeland Architects in Seattle. "It had to be something that could run throughout the house as well as the landscaping."

Concrete block fit the bill. Weinstein did make a few adjustments, though, to keep the home from looking intimidating or institutional. "We cut the module in half lengthwise, so that we were using 4-by-16-inch block instead of 8-by-16-inch," he says. "It made the project feel much more residential and unique." And he specified warm, rich mahogany for the windows and door frames to offset the austere concrete.

Weinstein's deft use of materials did not go unnoticed: The house received an award of honor in the 2000 AIA/NCMA (National Concrete Masonry Association) Design Awards of Excellence program.—m.d.

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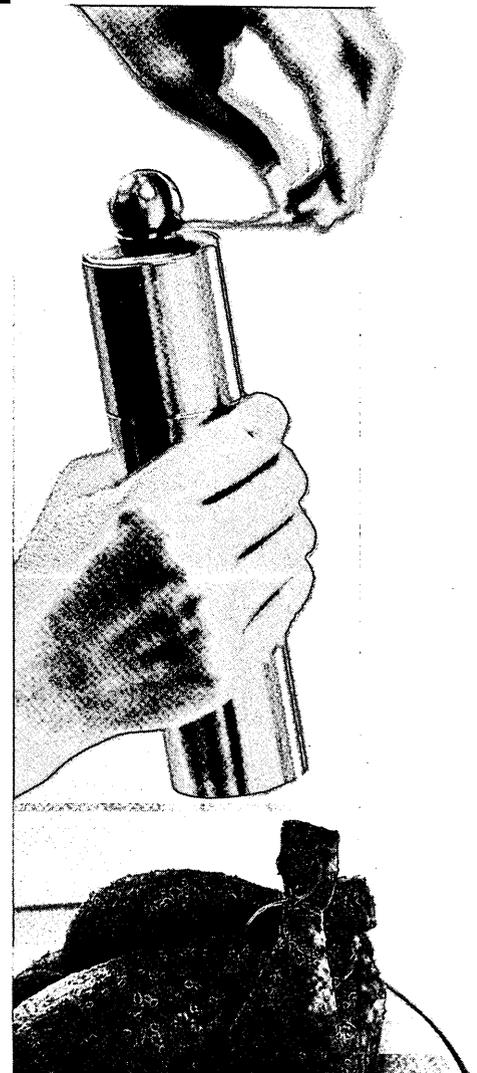


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on the boards / light house

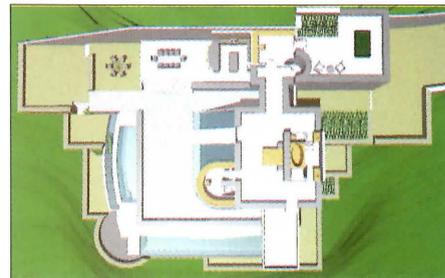
How does an architect compete with a 600-foot waterfall? If you're Manhattan architect Ismael Leyva, AIA, you give it center stage. Every room in this 8,000-square-foot house will be transparent and face the falling water, 300 feet away.

When the clients, a Virginia global trader and his wife, bought 5,000 acres of mountainous jungle near San Isidro, Costa Rica, they imagined living virtually outdoors. "They wanted all the transparency possible so they could hear and see the waterfall," Leyva says. Designed on five levels, the house's base will be indigenous stone. Its exterior walls will consist of glass panels, held together by ½-inch-thick steel cables. And the swooping roof is a Teflon-coated fiberglass membrane similar to those used for airports and outdoor concert halls. It will transmit some sunlight while limiting solar heat gain.

With no traditional ceilings, columns, or walls to define the living areas, the architect used changing elevations and shallow pools of water to divide floor



Ismael Leyva Architects



Leyva's rendering for the house, which faces a waterfall (off the left side of photo), features glass walls and a base of cascading stone terraces that follow the land's contours.

space. Inside and out, a series of platforms will follow the lay of the land, and the water theme will be integrated with a swimming pool, lap pool, and cascading fountains. "At night it will be spectacular," Leyva says. "The roof and all the glass will glow in the dark, and the waterfall will be lit upwards." Completion is set for 2002, at a cost of more than \$2 million.—*cheryl weber*

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the last word

ever wondered how to defend yourself and your profession at a cocktail party?

by sara o'neil manion

as an architect, do you ever feel underappreciated and misunderstood—not to mention undercompensated compared with other professionals, even in high rolling times? These feelings are particularly common among residential architects, whom the profession itself relegates to a separate—and not always exalted—category of architect. If other architects don't understand and respect what we do, how can we expect nonarchitects to have a clue?

party lines

I live in the Washington, D.C., metro area, where much important business is conducted in social settings. Fund-raisers, community functions, cultural events—all are venues for mixing and mingling with potential clients. To some degree, this happens everywhere in the country. You never know when a party will turn into a design job. The reality is, it often starts as a trial of your patience.

Many times I have been left speechless at a party by someone's ignorant comment on my profession. Balancing buffet plate, glass, and a free right hand for handshakes, the encounter usually begins like this:



James Oesch

Who says designing houses is easy? A residential architect must safely accommodate a multitude of functions—from food preparation to personal hygiene, entertainment to sleeping—in one beautiful building. The author's firm, O'Neil & Manion Architects, rose to the challenge in this renovation and expansion of a 1790s farmhouse.

Partygoer/potential client: And what do you do?

Me: I'm an architect.

Partygoer/potential client: Ohhhh, an architect. I always wanted to be an architect. What kind of architecture do you practice?

Me: I design houses.

Partygoer/potential client: How much fun it must be to design houses! And it must be so much easier than designing office buildings!

And so it goes, as the person runs through the usual stereotypes of architects. In years past, I haven't always known how best to disabuse the profes-

goer of his misconceptions without jeopardizing our potential client relationship, so I've sometimes just let the comments slide.

These days, I have a new resolve to address and correct misimpressions. For the good of all of us, residential architects must dash their inferiority complexes and tackle the public's ignorance of our profession head-on.

domestic engineering

My new response to the ignorati is this: "Yes, designing houses is loads of fun and, au contraire, houses are one of the most difficult buildings to design."

It may sound like a boast to those outside the profes-

sion, but it's true. Our firm, O'Neil & Manion Architects, of Bethesda, Md., has a sideline in designing Biosafety Level 2 and 3 research laboratories and I believe designing houses and working with residential clients is even more demanding.

The problem is that most people (including architects who've never designed a house) assume they know and understand residential design because they live in a house. But they take so much for granted.

And, frankly, maybe we do, too. Have you ever dissected the multiplicity of truly complex functions your design incorporates in a single structure?

For example, there are
continued on page 32

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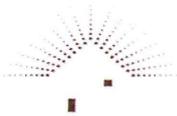
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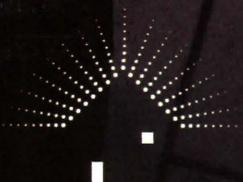


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“residential architects must tackle the public’s ignorance of our profession head-on.”



rooms or spaces for sleeping, where occupants, unconscious for hours at a time, must be protected from environmental hazards. There are rooms for basic human hygiene—including relieving oneself, bathing, grooming—with potential minefields such as water temperature, surface materials, lighting, and climate control. Similar issues arise in the kitchen, with the added complexity of facilitating the safe preparation, cooking, and storage of food.

In public rooms, floor planning and circulation must guide visitors logically and safely through spaces, avoiding any missteps or litigation-inducing accidents. Many homes also dedicate areas for music or books, and now there are often highly wired spaces for personal entertainment, including sound, video, television, Internet connections, and computer games.

Home offices must accommodate an array of

specialized equipment, such as multiline telephones, personal computers, printers, facsimile machines, photocopiers—not to mention the backup power supplies, operation manuals, and telephone books that accompany this machinery. Some elaborate home offices require separate entrances, waiting rooms, and security surveillance.

And, of course, there are utility rooms, laundry rooms, exercise rooms, game rooms, mudrooms, and guest rooms or suites. Some homes have mind-boggling requirements for storage, including spaces to handle the specific footwear, headgear, and other

body-part protection common in modern-day sport. Even dealing with the incoming mail is an important issue in today’s houses. And don’t forget the huge garages, sometimes amounting to more square footage than homes of 20 years ago.

Each of these spaces comprises hundreds of decisions related to function and the safety of its occupants. And it’s not enough that an architect design those spaces for safety’s sake, she or he must also make them beautiful—not just in isolation but in unity.

In short, the knowledge *continued on page 34*

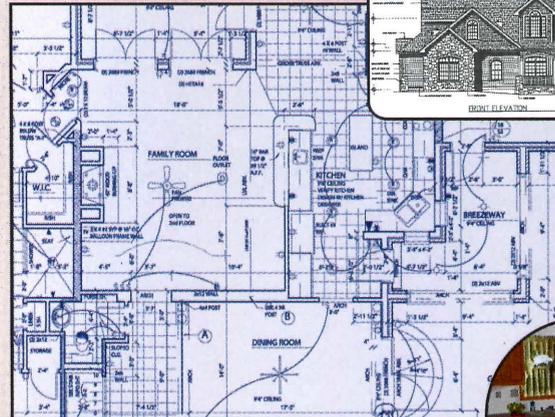
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Crown Molding (2nd)	6036	sq ft	0.18	1086.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1086.48
Crown Molding (3rd)	2050	sq ft	0.18	369.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	369.00
Crown Molding (4th)	412	sq ft	0.20	82.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	82.40
Crown Molding (5th)	2	sq ft	0.20	0.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.40
Crown Molding (6th)	12	sq ft	0.20	2.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.40
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necessary to design houses encompasses the expertise required to design a hotel, a library, a restaurant, a Laundromat, a warehouse, a business office, a movie theater, a fitness center, a communications center, a post office, and a parking garage—all crammed into a single structure. Added to that challenge are the clients who want all of this and more, but rarely have the budget to pay for it.

prototype casting

Meanwhile, back at the cocktail party inquisition, our potential client drags out the other big misconception all residential architects have to contend with:

Partygoer/potential client:

My friend had a house built, and it went months over schedule and thousands of dollars over budget.

Here, I explain how our firm works—how we address issues of budget and construction with our clients.

First off, we assure them that everyone wants more than they can afford. Then we collaborate with them to get their budget and their expectations in line early in the design process. Furthermore, we stress the need for hiring the very best contractor available, someone who really understands how to work with an archi-

tect to estimate and build a one-of-a-kind house. We warn clients that every construction project involves three corners of a triangle—quality, speed, and low cost—and they must pick two, because attaining all three is impossible.

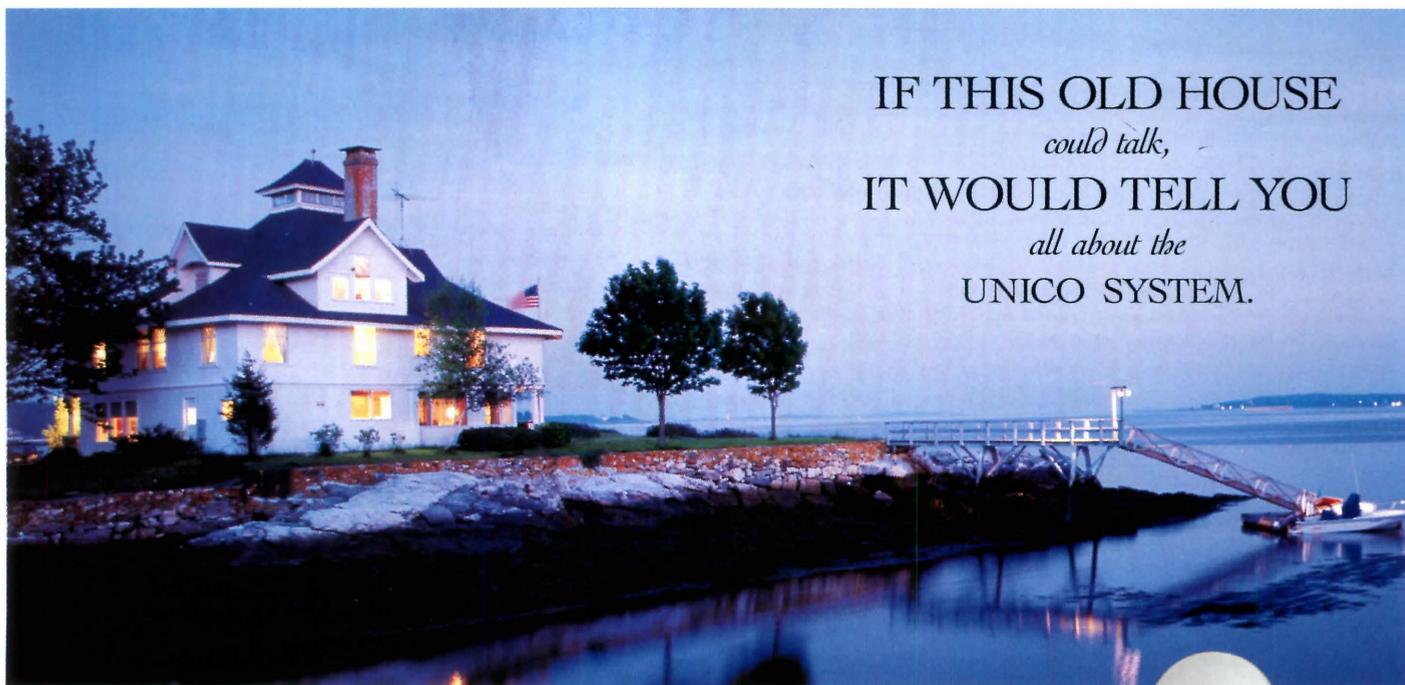
Wealthy clients are so accustomed to buying the best consumer products, they often don't realize that home construction is not like manufacturing. It's not the result of years of research, honing, and perfecting a single prototype. A custom home has no prototype. It's an original, and as such, it more closely resembles a work of art, with the flaws and imperfec-

tions of crafts built by hand.

superiority complex

There really is no reason why we should feel inferior to our colleagues who design office buildings. We are the ultimate entrepreneurs, taking on clientele who rarely bring repeat business and who frequently have no idea what services an architect provides. This makes the residential architect a daring business person of the first order and an educator of infinite patience. *ra*

Sara O'Neil Manion, AIA, is a principal of O'Neil & Manion Architects, P.A., in Bethesda, Md.



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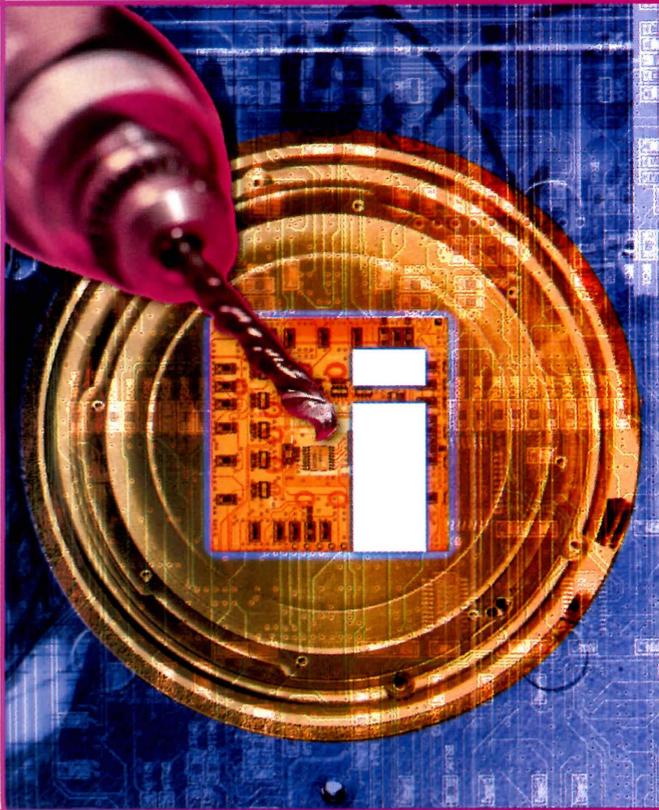
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great exits

it's never too soon to prepare for a partner's departure.

by cheryl weber

In 1993, Ralph Steinglass, FAIA, looked around at the architectural firm where he'd been a managing partner for seven years and realized it didn't fit him anymore. Although the company was successful and he liked his partners, it was headed in a different professional direction than he wanted to go. Steinglass and his partners spent a lot of time exploring ways the firm could accommodate his interests. But in the end, despite their generosity, the architect decided it was time to move on.

Fortunately, Steinglass had taken the time to develop other leaders within the firm, and the partner who took his place was someone he'd mentored. Yet there were other matters to resolve that required lengthy negotiations. Both sides retained their own attorney to hammer out the settlement agreement. "It would have been much better if a lot of those details had been hashed out earlier, rather than in the heat of the moment," Steinglass says. "Leaving was as amicable as one could have imagined. But that doesn't say it wasn't painful."

Steinglass' is not an isolated tale. As surely as the

years fold into decades, partners will come and go, for one reason or another. And demographics are immutable. In the larger business world, as the first wave of baby boomers turns 54—prime time for a job change or second-career itch—many of them are leaving management positions to start their own companies or pursue other professional interests. Others are calling it quits and enjoying life. Architecture firms interested in longevity should view the departure of key people

as an inevitable part of the cycle of change, and plan accordingly.

role play

"A partnership is like a kaleidoscope in which the partners are the big rocks," says management consultant Barbara Nagle of Marketscape, San Diego. "Certain patterns emerge. You take one of those people out and the patterns change, particularly for the people inside the firm."

Indeed, when a partner announces the intent to

leave, the first thing on the minds of those left behind is how to plug the gaping hole. If they're losing someone who's been a strong leader, the prospect of being without one presents some thorny organizational and emotional issues. On the other hand, the loss of a partner with less visible skills can also send the office scrambling to fill his or her shoes.

Years ago, that was the case when a top partner retired at Truex Cullins & Partners, Bennington,

continued on page 40



Martin Jarrie/marlanaagency.com



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Vt. “He was very much the technical heart of the office,” recalls Rolf Kielman, AIA. “It was a quieter skill that’s equally valuable but somehow had escaped notice. It’s much easier to identify someone who has really strong marketing skills, or responsibility for the flow of work as it comes into the office.”

Nagle notes that such skills don’t necessarily have to be replaced at the partner level. But whether the architect’s genius is in shaping the office culture, acting as the financial watchdog, or being the creative brain, it’s crucial that the company define the skills the individual brought to the team, and objectively replace them. In order to do that, there must be a long-term standard to meet, as opposed to just doing damage control. Well before the need arises



“a partnership is like a kaleidoscope in which the partners are the big rocks. you take one of those people out and the patterns change.”

—barbara nagle

to replace a partner, Nagle recommends answering these questions: What size firm are we going to be? What kinds of markets are we going to serve? Where will we put our best creative energies? Where will we go for higher margins? “If there are no facts to fall back on,” she warns, “replacing the partner is an emotional issue, and the departure could change those goals.”

For Truex Cullins, the

solution was not to put a partner in charge of the technical side of the office, but to hire and promote others whose skills in that area could be developed. In the end, the shake-up was a positive thing, Kielman says. “Technical know-how spread through the office more than it had previously.”

In the same vein, Steinglass, now a management consultant for architects, says part of dealing with

partnership change is understanding that as roles shift within the firm, the practice may benefit from different styles of leadership. “Perhaps the most difficult issue is ultimately not the fact that a key partner has left, though that may seem like the real problem,” he says. More significant is whether or not one of the remaining partners takes on the same role of the partner

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value judgments

“The most common way to value a firm is badly,” jokes Bill Fanning of PSMJ Research, Atlanta. Some architectural firms hire a combination of experts to do the job right: a local tax attorney, along with an architectural management consultant who has an insider’s perspective on the industry. That’s because the models for law firms and accounting firms are different than for architecture firms. “Law firms sell strictly at book value with no recognition of trade name or goodwill,” Fanning says. “And accounting firms use two times their annual billings as the basis for their value, because with tax returns they have a continuing customer base.”

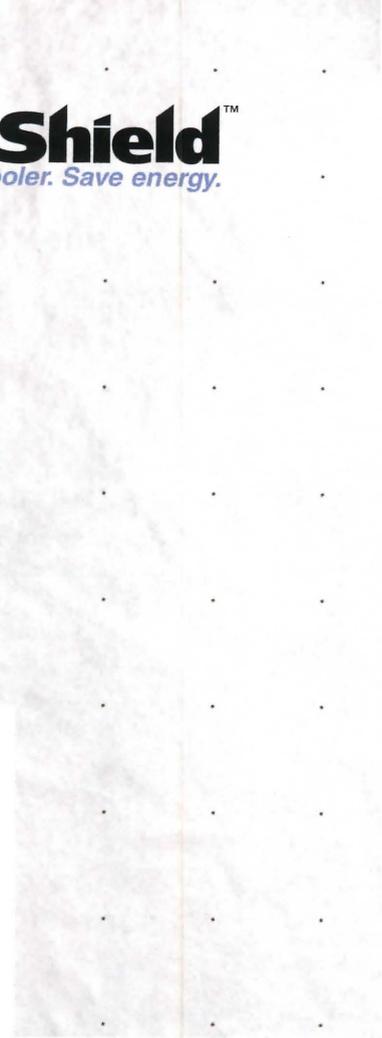
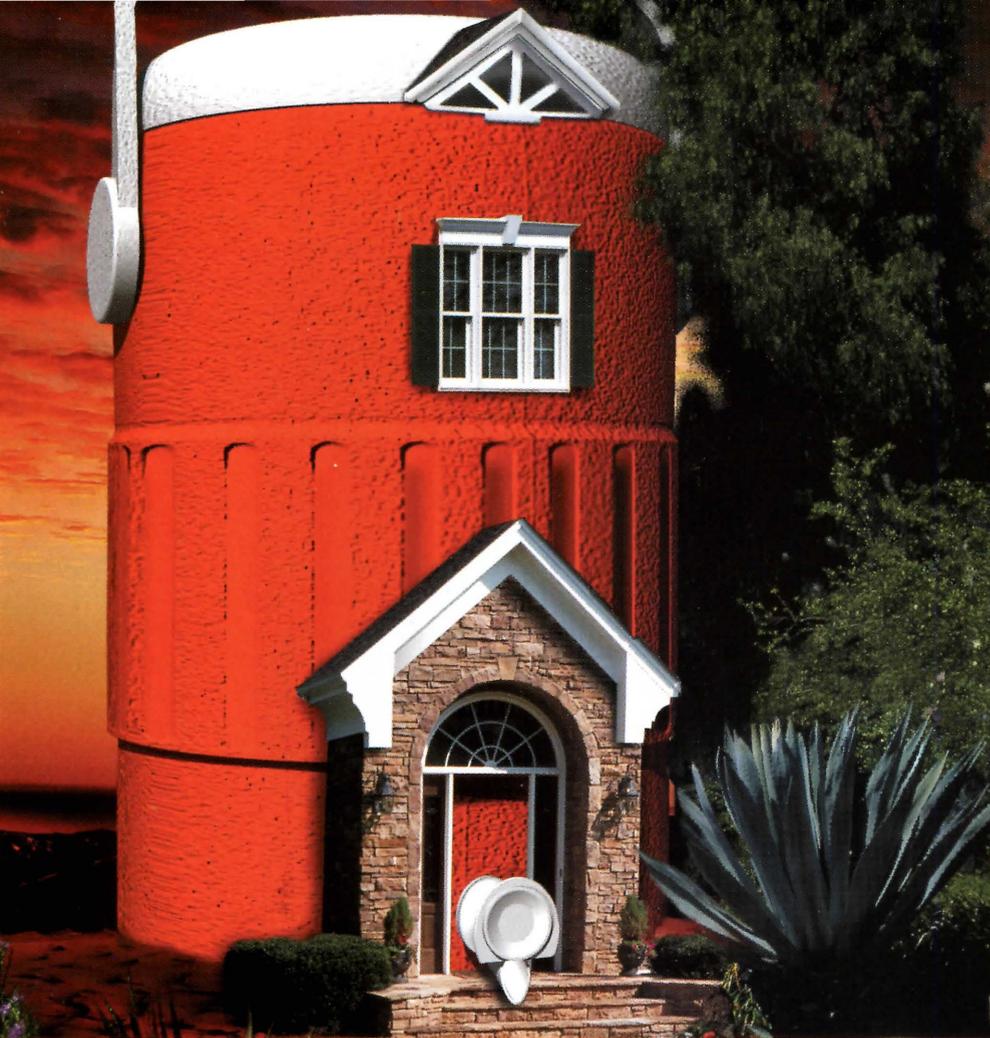
A good valuation looks at both net worth and income-producing ability. Fanning’s office, which specializes in architectural and engineering consulting, typically uses one of three methods for appraising a company’s

worth: 35 percent of its gross revenues, one-and-a-half to two times its book value (assets less liabilities), or five times its annual profits.

Even if the partners work out exacting formulas for determining shareholder value, though, the firm is endangered if they can’t come up with the cash when one of them leaves or dies unexpectedly. According to Joe Riley, director of financial services at Met Life, Oakland, Calif., there are four ways to fund a buy/sell: using cash profits on hand, borrowing, making installment payments, and using life and/or disability insurance. “Most good buy/sell agreements will have a paragraph covering disability of one of the partners,” Riley says.

The insurance is a prudent purchase particularly when there is a large age discrepancy between junior and senior partners.—c.w.

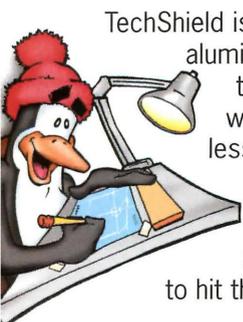
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“if there’s any ambiguity at all, that leads to trouble.”

—ray kogan



who left—perhaps a very strong, controlling kind of management—or develops a more democratic style of leadership. “There may be equal pull in each direction,” Steinglass says. “It’s an internal struggle with a series of complex issues.”

exit stage right

With their business plans firmly in hand, many architectural offices are preparing for a predictable kind

of departure—retirement—long before the partner’s chair is empty. Bloodgood Sharp Buster Architects and Planners, Des Moines, Iowa, sees 10 years as a healthy transition period. The firm is structured so that each partner is in charge of one of its nine regional offices, from which they are expected to groom a successor. “It’s an attitude we talk about in the firm, making sure

younger people are given opportunities to grow,” says partner Doug Sharp, AIA.

Some principals hesitate to bring a young staff member into leadership discussions because they assume the person isn’t ready. But that can backfire. According to Hugh Hochberg, a consultant with Coxe Group, Seattle, the average age of architects who leave a firm to start their own company is 31, whereas the average age of architects promoted to principal within a firm is 44. “Managing that gap is critical for an effective transition plan,” says Richard Wagner, AIA, Baylis Architects, Bellevue,

Wash. The company has extended its “be prepared” attitude to written standards outlining what it takes to become an associate, a senior associate, and a principal. “In our firm, being an associate means more than being here for a certain number of years,” Wagner says. “There’s a progression people can walk through.”

Ideally, Baylis thinks in terms of five to 10 years for a retirement handoff—time enough for an up-and-comer to learn how to use power, to earn credibility in the firm and with important clients, and to absorb the company culture. Such

continued on page 44

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forethought also gives the exiting person a chance to scale back unwanted duties. "One of the things we've found is that when people start thinking about retirement, between now and five years out there's a lot of this business they don't want to do anymore," Wagner says. "We make every effort to accommodate those kinds of wishes, by delegating those tasks to someone else."

prenuptial agreement

Whether an architect is retiring or joining another firm, the breakup of a business partnership can easily

become as acrimonious as any divorce. Often the partners left behind feel they've been betrayed.

Likewise, the moment of leaving may be the first time the departing partner has looked at the written provisions for resigning—if indeed any exist. "In an organization that's been ongoing for a while, the structure tends to protect the senior partners from those who want to leave," Steinglass says. "A lot of bad feelings come from issues that haven't been looked at, such as noncompete clauses and claiming credit for work, that make it difficult to earn a living."

The easiest way to steer clear of these trouble spots is for the parties to examine the agreement at the time it's entered into, making sure its details are fair to both sides.

That's not to say the ground rules can't change. "The ownership agreement is, in effect, a floor that's there if all parties do not agree to do something else," says Bill Fanning of PSMJ Research in Atlanta. "If everyone is agreeable, you can change it either on a one-time basis or continue a new method of doing it."

Every partnership agreement should address sever-

al issues. A particularly complex one involves what's referred to as the noncompete clause. Each state, in fact, has its own body of laws related to restrictive covenants.

According to Fanning, a fair provision from the firm's point of view might prevent the architect from practicing the same type of architecture within a geographic area over a reasonable time period—say, up to two years. It would prohibit the former partner from co-opting any of the firm's clients or its employees and restrict the reuse of materials such as drawings,

continued on page 46

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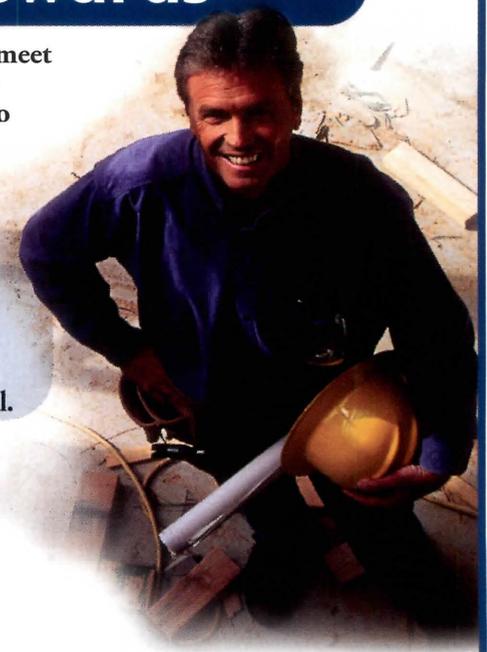
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standard specs, or details.

However, Ray Kogan, a consultant with Zweig-White, Washington, D.C., notes that geographical restrictions can be quite a handicap for a practicing architect. And the terms are difficult to enforce legally. "You can't prevent someone from earning a living in the trade for which they're qualified," he says.

Alternatively, Kogan suggests creating a financial disincentive for competing. For example, if a partner leaves to do something completely different, or moves out of the firm's range of business, he is awarded the increased value of the stock. But if he remains a

competitor, he receives only the money he paid for his share of ownership.

The ex-partner should also protect himself against the possibility of being named in a third-party lawsuit, filed against the firm for work performed during his employment. "When one leaves the firm one expects there will be provisions for liability ending, but that may not be the case," Steinglass says. "The agreement should resolve the details for both parties."

A common solution, according to Fanning, is to purchase a professional liability policy that covers past work up to the point of the person's leaving. "The issue is who pays for it," he says. "But it's usually pretty cheap—figure on \$600 for a one-time premium."

Then, too, a bitter battle may ensue over who gets the credit for past work. Ultimately, it's an honor system, Fanning says. But architects have the right to claim credit for work on which they were the lead designer or manager.

the going rate

The most important piece of the partnership document—and the one most fraught with pitfalls—is the buy/sell agreement. When a firm is established, one of the first orders of business is to have an attorney outline how its worth is determined (see sidebar, page

40). "If there's any ambiguity at all, that leads to trouble," Kogan observes, adding that "the buyout period should be specific, and a function of what the company can afford."

Even so, such documents shouldn't just be seen as what happens at the end of the road. Manhattan attorney Larry Gainen, with Ingram, Yuzek, Gainen, Carroll, and Bertolotti, says a well-designed financial package gives the partners an incentive to work hard. "You want to create a precedent that motivates them to build up value for their own retirement," Gainen says, "but isn't too much of a burden on those left behind. You have to balance those kinds of issues."

Since its inception in 1961, JBZ Architecture + Planning, Newport Beach, Calif., has been through two partner buyouts. President Don Jacobs, AIA, says it's crucial to hire a knowledgeable tax attorney to set the ground rules, and to structure the buyout so the tax burden is balanced between both parties. "We made sure we were going down a path everyone was comfortable with," Jacobs says.

During the most recent transition, the partner negotiated a five-year buyout plan. In the first year, the retiring architect will work 60 percent of the time. He'll work 50 percent the second year. And a fee paid over the next three years—half for consulting and half for

stock holdings—will finish up the deal.

"There are a lot of standard pieces to a buy/sell agreement, but you never assemble them the same way twice," Fanning says. "Every firm is unique in what they want out of the future, combined with how they manage their business today."

grace under pressure

When a partner decides to leave after having invested years in a company, the ramifications are long lasting. Despite his own subsequent success, Steinglass admits to still feeling pangs about not being part of his old firm anymore.

"You can't overcommunicate in situations like this," he says of a partner exit. "The loss can be like that of a family member. But it's to be expected that people will leave. The best the parties can do is hear clearly from each other the changes that are needed and reach some level of acceptance, without animosity."

BSB's Sharp agrees. "Honor the individual, even if it doesn't meet the best interests of the firm," he says. "Find a win-win situation. Because you're affecting the life and future of the individual, the company, and the people still in the company." **ra**

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



"you can't overcommunicate in situations like this. the best the parties can do is hear clearly from each other ... and reach some level of acceptance, without animosity."

—ralph steinglass, faia



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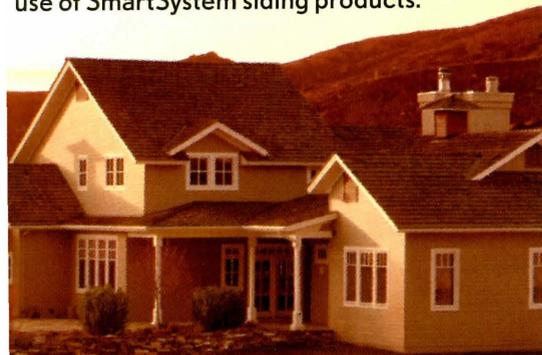
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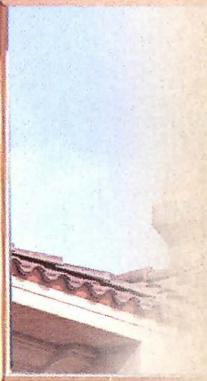


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by meghan drueding

matt and Libby Elliott seem to have a knack for making things go their way. The Blue Hill, Maine-based husband-and-wife team managed to turn a significant setback—unexpected unemployment during the 1993 recession—into a golden opportunity to start their own architectural firm. “I got laid off, and we thought, ‘It’s now or never,’” says Matt. They parlayed their first major commission, which fell into their laps in 1994, into a much-celebrated, award-winning house. And when an old building they’d always admired went on sale in 1999, they snapped it up and transformed it into sparkling new offices for their 10-person firm.

Coincidence? Hardly. The Elliotts live and work by guiding principles that have propelled them smack into success. They base their hiring decisions on their gut instincts, seeking out individuals who share their philosophies and design ideals. “David’s resume was hand typed on an old typewriter,” recalls Libby of staff designer David Leonard. “We said, ‘We have to meet this guy.’” And they choose projects that promise to be challenging and interesting, rather than going for the most lucrative commissions. So far, that’s translated into mostly residential work—both vacation homes and full-time residences—in this upscale, summer-resort area of Maine. “We’re experi-

menting with new project types, like the town library Libby did over in Brooksville,” Matt says. “But even those have been similar in scale to residential work.”

the new old thing

First and foremost among those guiding principles is a belief in the value of both the old and the new. It’s hard to pinpoint Elliott & Elliott’s style—one observer might call their work Modern, while another might think of it as traditional. That’s just the way the architects like it. “You can balance the older, vernacular styles with new elements,” Libby says. “You don’t have to compromise and do one or the other.” The firm’s office is a perfect example. Located in a white clapboard 1830s building on Main Street in Blue Hill, it features plain white walls and utilitarian desks. Over the conference table hang quirky free-form light fixtures by local lighting designer Peter Knuppe. Several old wooden credenzas rescued from Maine’s Department of Transportation now serve as storage space for plans and job documents. It all looks so effortless, but in reality a great deal of thought went into mixing the contemporary with the historic.

That same idea of hopping from old to new and back again distinguishes the firm’s kitchen and bath designs. A kitchen by Elliott & Elliott might contain a farmhouse-style trough sink, rendered in sleek, locally

Rather than work in one specific style, Matt and Libby Elliott (left) draw design inspiration from each client. Edward and Carla Rosenzweig, the owners of this Brooklin, Maine, vacation house, liked the expansiveness of their full-time residence, a Baltimore loft. So the Elliotts created a loft-like first floor, using half walls to separate the kitchen, dining room, and living room.

vintage modern



All photos by Brian Vanden Brink, except where noted.

Elliott & Elliott's attention to detail resonates in the Rosenzweig kitchen and dining room. Streamlined finger pulls rather than bulky cabinet hardware, for example, contribute to the design's Shaker-like simplicity.



*“objects are beautiful. the more mundane something is,
the more we like it.”—libby elliott*

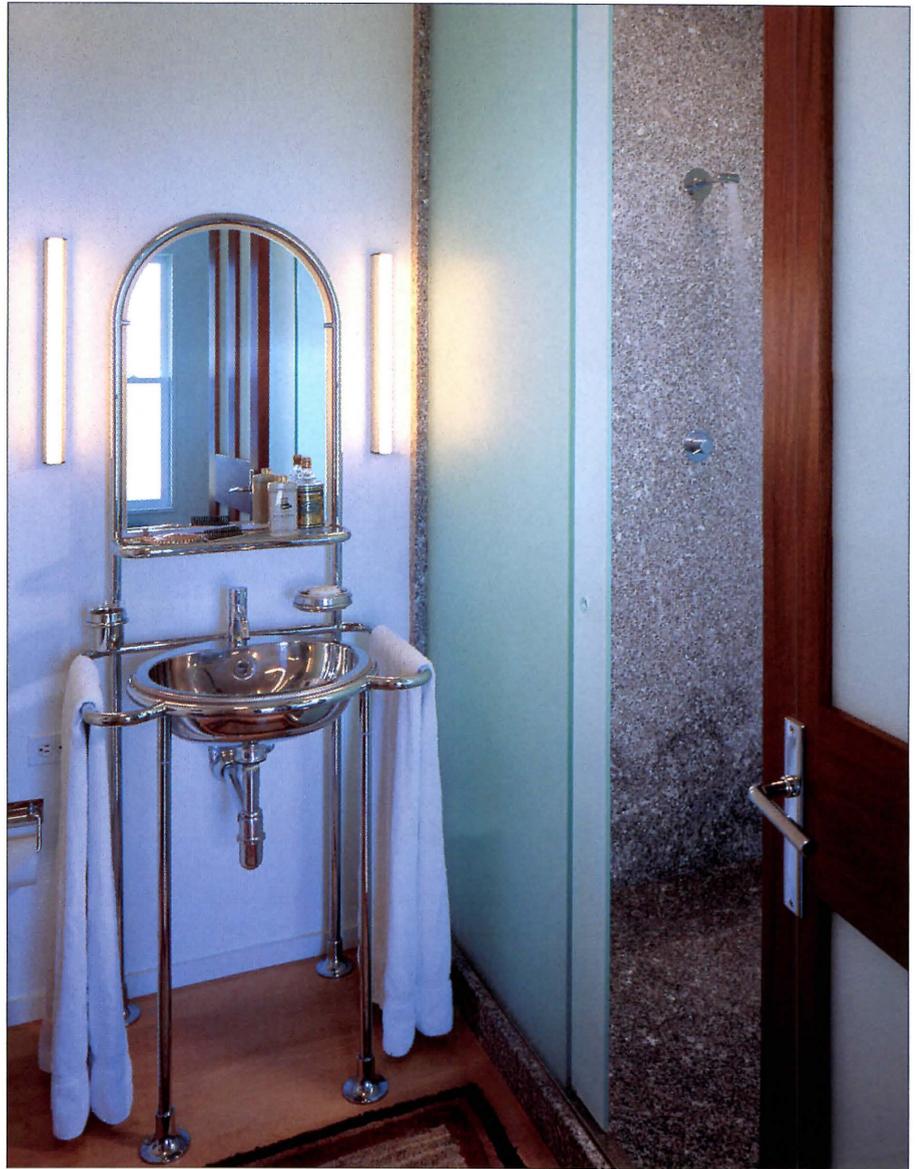
obtained granite. The traditional form makes the sink utterly appropriate in this land of barns and blueberry fields, but the austere material keeps it from being sentimental while providing another layer of context. A bath’s industrial light fixtures might offset its cozy bead-board paneling. And a modern, open floor plan might usher an old-fashioned kitchen with glass-front cabinets and vintage hardware into the 21st century.

The Elliotts have a palette of materials they consistently draw from—granite, wood, and stainless steel, to name a few—but in their hands a raw material becomes something different in every project. “The question for me is, how do you update vernacular forms without cliché or without stripping them of their quality?” Libby says. “We’re finding that it’s really about maintaining the original materials, but putting them together in a new way.”

It’s easy enough to see how Elliott & Elliott fuel their admiration for New England vernacular buildings—a quick walk or drive around Blue Hill and its environs reveals a trove of 19th century Colonial, Greek Revival, and Shaker-style treasures. But while they obviously appreciate the richness of their surroundings, they’re aware of the dangers that come with living in as remote a location as coastal Maine. “I don’t want to get stagnant up here,” says Matt. “I like having young people at the firm.”

Architect Bruce Norelius, who befriended both Elliotts during architecture school at the University of Pennsylvania and joined their firm in 1995, agrees. “The Penn connection is very apparent in Matt and Libby and me,” he says. “We all like things to be very orderly. The younger ones here aren’t like that at all—they’re into the more experimental stuff.” The firm’s employee makeup is a blend of more experienced architects like Norelius and Greg Johnson, who had his own firm for almost 20 years before joining Elliott & Elliott, and recent architecture school graduates.

Design magazines, lectures in Boston and Portland, Maine, and frequent travel supply employees with additional links to the architecture community at large. The variety of backgrounds, educations, and experiences among them makes for a lively, ongoing debate over how to best reconcile traditional and Modern design, and the Elliotts say this tug-of-war makes for stronger, better projects.



objects of affection

Another concept that gets a fair amount of consideration at Elliott & Elliott is the notion of using everyday objects as sculpture. “Objects are beautiful,” says Libby. “The more mundane something is, the more we like it. We love the traditional utilitarian use of things like porcelain sockets or plain white tiles. It’s that idea of elegance as opposed to luxury.” This reverence for functional objects is especially apparent in the firm’s

As with many of the firm’s bathrooms, the storage space for the Rosenzweig bath is located in a separate closet. This keeps the space clutter-free, allowing objects like the stainless-steel vanity and etched-glass shower wall to shine.



Danny Turner

Original barn beams and whimsical light fixtures in Elliott & Elliott's conference room illustrate the firm's penchant for mixing old and new. Pictured, from left: Isaac Robbins, Matthew O'Malia, Matt Elliott, John Gallagher, Hadley O'Malia, Libby Elliott, David Leonard, Mary Perkins, and Bruce Norelius.

kitchens and baths; ovens, sinks, refrigerators, and showers tend to stand alone, rather than be surrounded by cabinetry or decoration. The storage space in an Elliott & Elliott kitchen or bath can often be found outside of the room's main work area, in a nearby closet, cabinet, or pantry. Eliminating the need for a lot of storage further simplifies the room visually, letting whichever object or objects the architects have chosen to highlight—a pedestal sink, a handcrafted shelf, an antique appliance—stand out even more.

The strategy of singling out objects goes against the conventional wisdom put forth by manufacturers and shelter magazines, which dictates the current trend of assimilating appliances into the rest of the room through furniture-like enclosures and coverings. But then, Maine isn't a trendy, follow-the-leader kind of place. This part of the state in particular, an assembly of rocky islands and windswept beaches, houses many artists, writers, and other creative types. Artistically

inclined clients, naturally, are likely to appreciate the sculptural approach, and indeed Elliott & Elliott counts several artists and collectors as customers.

interpersonal skills

Elliott & Elliott's respect for individuality doesn't stop at object worship. The firm also views each of its clients as a unique entity. That's why the Elliotts never tire of designing housing: They approach every project with a fresh eye. And that's why they don't have a set style—among the work in their portfolio you'll find a Japanese-influenced bungalow, a Shingle-style cottage, and a Modern art studio. And that's why clients feel their homes are expressions of themselves, not of their architects. "It's not about us," Libby says of the firm's design process. "It's about translating a person or a couple or a family into a home."

Because the Elliotts are so committed to their clients, they usually get involved in each project to a degree some might call fanatical. To them, it's just good business. "I like to know what's going on with every project that comes through this office," says Matt, who takes charge of day-to-day operations at the firm. "When a client calls wanting to know a detail about their kitchen cabinets and the project architect isn't here, I can get on the phone and answer them. That's the reason I don't want to get much bigger than we are now. We have 30 projects under way, and it's the maximum number I can handle." Everyone in the office performs duties that aren't in his or her job description at one time or another—the client's needs are always the top priority. "I don't think anyone there has an enormous ego," says Fred Green, a longtime friend and client of the Elliotts. "I work principally with Matt, but the other day I needed something and another architect there, Isaac Robbins, handled it for me. They've created a great culture at that office."

All communication between clients and architects is customized to the clients' preferences. Technophobes receive hand drawings and painstakingly built models of wood, Plexiglas, and metal, while computer-friendly clients comment by e-mail on CAD drawings and virtual-reality walk-throughs. At the end of every project, Elliott & Elliott buy the clients a personalized housewarming gift; recent examples include a concrete urn for an artist and an outdoor bench for a family of nature lovers. A painting by another artist

“i like to know what’s going on with every project that comes through this office. that’s the reason I don’t want to get much bigger than we are now.” —matt elliott, aia



Depending on the project, the firm’s principals sometimes opt to work with specialists like lighting designers or landscape architects. They collaborated with a kitchen designer, Kitchenworks of Ellsworth, Maine, on the Brooksville, Maine, Graf residence. The ultra-organized kitchen (above) opens into a dining room and bookshelf-lined family room (left).

vintage modern



A piece of etched glass serves as both sculptural object and shower enclosure in the Graf master bath. By slanting the floor slightly downward towards the drain, Elliott & Elliott eliminated the need for a shower threshold.

“the question for me is, how do you update vernacular forms without cliché or without stripping them of their quality?”—libby elliott

client hangs in the architects’ office, and Green, for whom they have designed a guest house, playground, and billiards cabin, is the godfather to one of the couple’s three children. Clearly, client relationships occupy a central position at the firm.

team approach

So do relationships with builders. The Elliotts don’t think of contractors as a nuisance, and they certainly don’t view them as interchangeable. “It’s very important to match the right contractor with the right project,” Libby says. “A few of the builders we work with used to be boat builders, and we might ask them to do a job that required lots of detailing.” The architects don’t hesitate to ask builders for their ideas on how to solve design problems, and the builders have noticed. “Architects can be difficult at times, and we can be difficult too,” says Nelson Goodwin, a Seal Cove, Maine, contractor who’s teamed with the firm on several projects. “But everybody over at Elliott & Elliott is easy to work with, and they really listen to us.” Local contractor John Altman even connected them with their first big commission, the Rosenzweig residence in Brooklin, Maine. The house eventually picked up multiple AIA design awards.

The firm’s esteem for the building profession also extends to other, related trades. They’ve hired craftspeople like blacksmiths and welders to execute tricky details. And they encourage their clients to use specialists if the program requires a skill that’s out of their scope. “We can design a well-laid-out kitchen for most people’s cooking needs,” says Matt. “But if a client is into gourmet French cooking and has very specific desires, then I recommend that we work with a kitchen designer. We want to be part of the discussion, but we’re not experts in everything.” The Elliotts routinely commission Brooklin, Maine, landscape architect Dorothy Wurman to perform a predesign site analysis that plots vegetation, underlying rock veins, and sunlight patterns. “Most of what the site analysis shows us is obvious,” says Norelius. “But we usually end up learning something that will help us decide how to site the house.”

Even if they wanted to, Matt and Libby Elliott wouldn’t have time to become experts in all the subsets of residential design. Though they don’t advertise, word-of-mouth recommendations have netted



them a year-and-a-half-long waiting list. They have three elementary-school-age kids to raise, and a new house—a former granite company built in the 1820s—to renovate. But they do find the time to design and send out a thoughtful holiday gift to their clients and colleagues at the end of every calendar year. It’s a luminaire—a candleholder carved from unfinished maple and surrounded by a white lantern of hand-made paper. “The luminaire is about making something beautiful out of humble materials,” says Libby. “We could go to Williams-Sonoma and get something similar, but that just wouldn’t be us.” *ra*

Practicality plays a starring role in the firm’s kitchens and baths. Here, twin pedestal sinks and a separate tub and shower make the Graf bath comfortable for two people to use at the same time.

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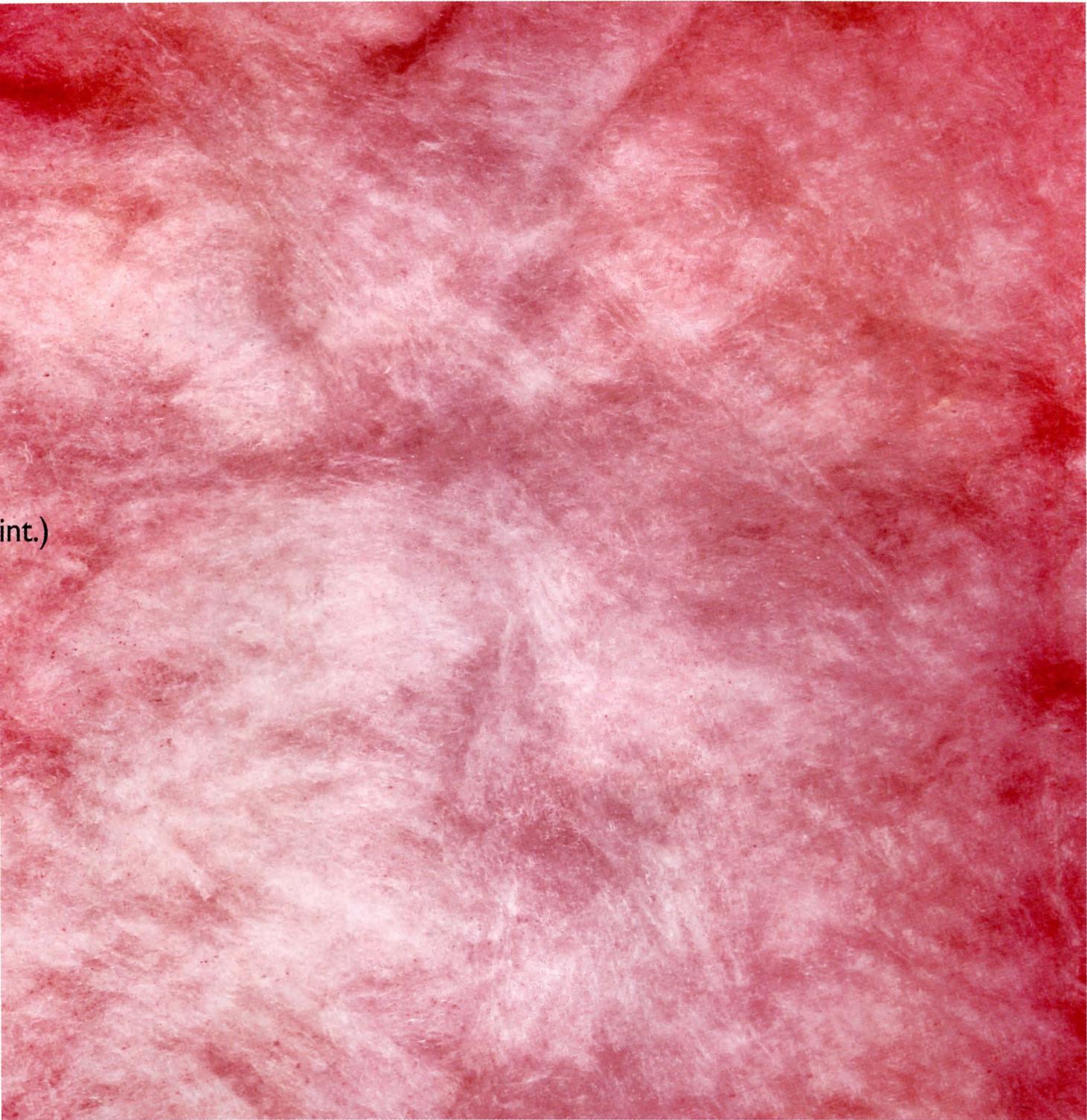
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holistic approach

by cheryl weber
and nigel f. maynard

all magazines are guilty of this—*residential architect* included: For design portfolios, trend reports, and special sections, we sever beautiful kitchens and baths from the equally beautiful houses they occupy. Not only is it often a waste of a project, it's also frequently misleading. As all good architects know, you can't design a room in isolation; it must relate to and integrate with the whole house. So, in the spirit of reunification, our design report focuses on kitchens and baths in their natural setting—the house.





A light-filled, streamlined kitchen lies at the core of David Jameson's renovation of a Washington, D.C., ranch. Two skylights echo the dimensions of the island and the seating group, funneling in daylight. The kitchen's pass-through makes a visual connection to the foyer and opens up the house for entertaining.

Hoachlander Davis

connecting rooms

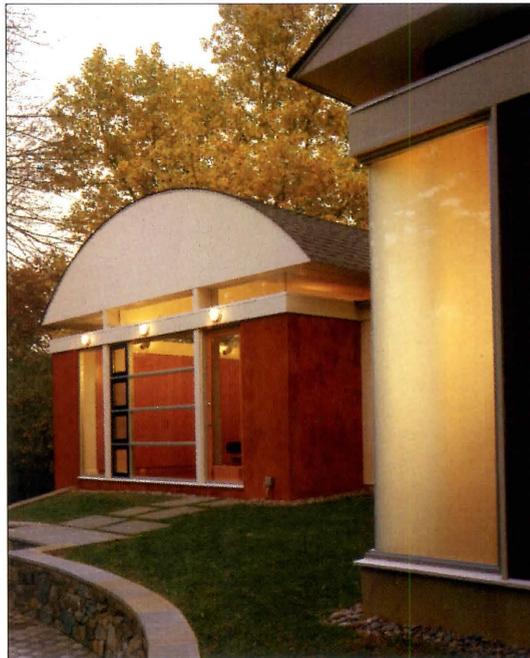
a lot of people think of kitchens as rooms unto themselves,” says architect David Jameson, AIA, Alexandria, Va. “But they’re never designed that way.” In this ranch-house renovation in suburban Washington, D.C., Jameson created a series of free-flowing, light-filled living spaces, with a streamlined kitchen at the core. His approach was to come up with a few good ideas about how to unify the rooms, and use them over and over again.

orderly logic

Like most homeowners today, these clients are fairly informal. But the maze of rooms in their long rambler didn’t let them live that way. Their requirements were unequivocal: They wanted a house that was agile enough for entertaining. And they wanted the house to read as a one-bedroom, with a discreet door that took guests to the two other bedrooms, rarely used.

With that in mind, Jameson moved the dining room to create a new entryway that leads much deeper into the house. A luminous, Lens limestone floor became a gracious gallery that opens onto the living room and dining room straight ahead. To the left, it moves past the kitchen and great room and ends at the rear of the house, connecting to a new garage and garden entrance. The architect’s orderly logic left no detail unturned. By creating counter-height pass-throughs at two strategic spots, he skewered the kitchen and great room on a sight line that extends from the entryway to a rear wall in the master suite. “I wanted to create a very long axis and vistas through the house, so each space linked up to the next visually,” he says.

A former bedroom and a breezeway were sacrificed to make the kitchen the house’s hub. Whether the owners enter the house through the front door or the garage, they can quickly unload



their groceries. And the kitchen’s location works equally well during parties. Guests linger there while picking up hors d’oeuvres and drinks, and then flow into the foyer or living room.

tidy solutions

Jameson observes a paradox in the way many people envision their kitchens. Some who don’t cook spend a lot of money on shiny appliances they can show off. Conversely, serious chefs often want a utilitarian kitchen they can close from view. This couple, though, took a middle ground. They asked for a straightforward but attractive kitchen that would make prep work and cleanup easy. Simple as it is, the kitchen’s galley layout, with its long island and a 4½-foot space between the island and rear counter, was inspired





Throughout the house, Brazilian cherry floors and beech cabinetry warm up the sleek minimalism. The pass-through, on axis with one in the kitchen wall, peeks into a hallway outside the master suite. Jameson

floated clerestory windows and a barrel-vault roof over the former garage (opposite page). The new garage has the same roof form as the existing house, but abstracted with a slot.

Photos: Hoachlander Davis

holistic approach

by the heavy-duty restaurant kitchens Jameson has designed.

“From an ergonomic standpoint, the galley style works well,” he says. “The chefs can quickly turn around and work at different stations.” Other efficiencies are built in, too. Pots and pans are stowed in deep drawers that can be pulled out for full view. And a cabinet door on the front of the island conceals a portable phone base and a fax machine. “Most renovated kitchens are way bigger than they need to be,” the architect says. “This kitchen is no bigger than the one they had, but it’s 10 times more functional.”

The kitchen and great room’s tidy minimalism is tempered with rich materials that are inviting to touch. Sliding doors on the upper cupboards are hammered wire glass in zinc frames. Zinc is a warmer metal than stainless steel, Jameson notes. And the fine-grained beech cabinetry and Brazilian cherry floor are repeated elsewhere in the house. “Wood is the great equalizer in modern architecture,” he says. “You can take hard, cold spaces and invigorate them with well-made pieces in natural wood.”

inner light

Light is another natural element that invigorates the whole remodel. Despite 8-foot ceilings, the kitchen and the great room are flooded with sunlight. Jameson replaced an exterior wall with floor-to-ceiling aluminum windows that face the side yard. The operable ones are painted dark blue to match the blue pearl granite countertops. Precise skylight slots also let in natural light, even on overcast days. One atop the island measures its exact dimensions; another in the great room echoes the outline of the seating group. “When you’re standing in one of those spaces,” Jameson says, “it feels completely open to the sky.”

Just as the beech and Brazilian cherry wood in the kitchen were carried into the master suite on the bed, cabinetry, and floor, so was the gridded wall of windows. It commands views of the pool garden in both bedroom and bath. For privacy, a motorized shade is tucked into the soffits. Even with close neighbors on the side, Jameson did all he could to maximize light. In the garage-to-bedroom conversion, a new barrel-vault roof floats



above clerestory windows that funnel in light from up high. And for privacy in this minimally composed room, a 5-foot by 8-foot “rolling wall,” wonderfully devoid of knobs, closes off the bedroom from the hallway. “When the door is shut, you feel like you’re in a serene, warm area,” the architect says.

Thanks to its deftly organized spaces, the back of the house is a private retreat that also makes quick work of the morning routine. The bath is part of a breezeway linking the suite to the new garage—which it barely touches—and several rear entrances. “The owners go running first thing in the morning,” Jameson notes. “Their shoes are stored in the hall closet, next to a built-in bench. When they’re finished, they jump in the pool and come right into the master suite to shower and dress.” The bath features a pair of custom-designed aluminum lavs and a Lens limestone shower with translucent glass on two sides. One side faces the pool; the other illuminates the rear hallway.

In this home, the clients got a new kitchen and bath that are efficient and fun to use. Even better, the judiciously chosen mix of materials adds up to a cost-effective remodel that makes a coherent whole.—c.w.



Built-ins and a rolling door lend a sense of serenity to the master suite. The bath, which can be closed off with a sandblasted-glass pocket door, is a bridge linking the old and new garage.



Walls of windows in the master suite echo those in the kitchen and great room. Jameson designed the bath vanity, with its aluminum vessels, and the bed.



project:
Private residence,
Chevy Chase, Md.
architect:
David Jameson Architect,
Alexandria, Va.
contractor:
Sabra Design,
Kensington, Md.
size before renovation:
2,200 square feet
size after renovation:
2,700 square feet
cost per square foot:
Withheld

Exterior doors in the bedroom, bath, hall, and garage allow easy access to the pool garden.

holistic
approach

cooking light

Susi Chuegraf is a semiprofessional chef with a wall's worth of cookbooks. So she and her husband, Martin Pagel, expected the kitchen to be the heart of their renovated Kirkland, Wash., farmhouse. Even they, however, couldn't have envisioned the level to which their architect, Taylor Van Horne, would take the idea. He conceived the soaring space as an old hearth that funnels cooking smoke upward. But instead of smoke, this 21st-century chimney captures the elusive eastern light and directs it down into the house.

ecstatic levels

Like every young American family who encounters a house 100 years old, these owners wanted to double its size. The challenge was to add on without overwhelming the character and scale of the original farmhouse, built by the Kirks for whom Kirkland was named. Upstairs, three tiny bedrooms covered under 6-foot 2-inch ceilings. Van Horne tore down walls, raised the roof two feet, and gave the entire first floor over to the living room and dining room.

The densely wooded lot dictated the two-story addition's placement on the north. To break up the bulk, Van Horne designed the floor plate 30 inches lower than the existing house. And in deference to the farmhouse, the addition is barnlike, constructed of massive timbers recycled from a Weyerhaeuser mill that was being demolished. From the new entryway, visitors can step up to the living room or head into the kitchen, which occupies the rest of the addition's first floor.

There, a constellation of posts and beams pushes the ceiling from 7½ feet to a dramatic 28 feet, where it meets a massive skylight. The





Morning light sifts down through massive rafters by way of a skylight, like sunlight in an old-growth forest. Van Horne positioned the island to take in a view of the Olympic Mountains.

Photos: Robin Constable

holistic approach

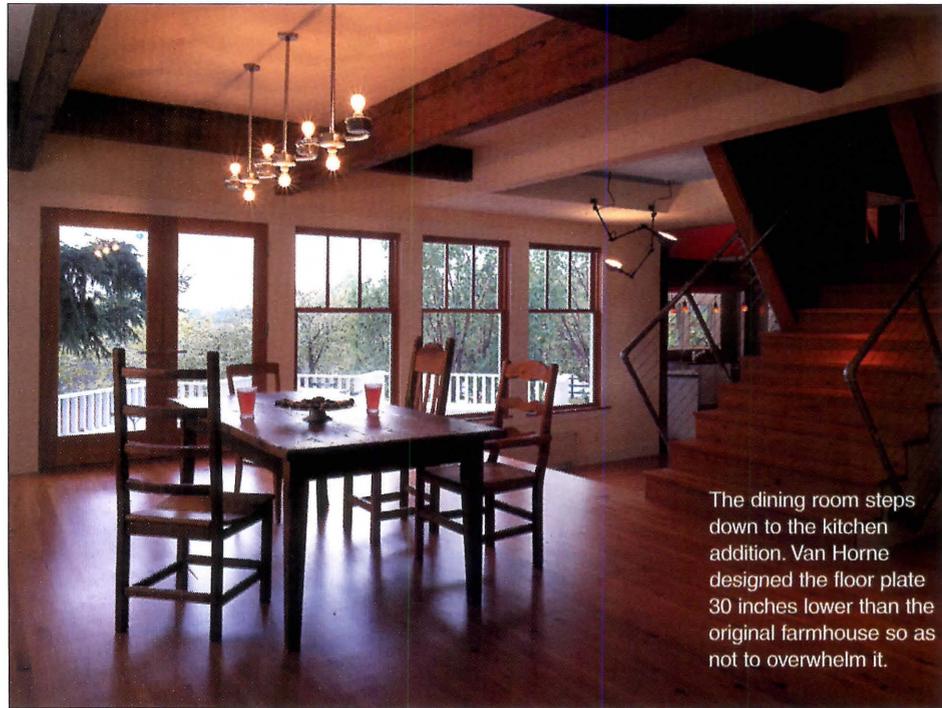
towering structure was inspired by the saki barns Van Horne visited in Takayama, Japan. “Sumptuary laws forced the merchant class to push their materials and forms to ecstatic levels,” he says. “In a forested area, they made light chimneys using post-and-beam construction with elaborate joinery.”

beyond rustic

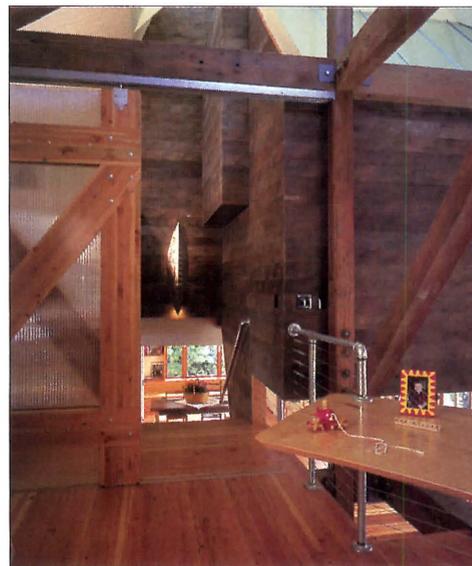
Compelling as it is, the rustic does not rule in this household. Throughout the project, Van Horne worked closely with the owners (Martin was formerly with Microsoft) to incorporate a modern, high-tech look. “They wanted something that wouldn’t be discordant with the farmhouse,” he says, “but nothing cute.” Granite counters provide a sleek contrast to all the exposed wood, as do the stainless-steel backsplash and Viking range. On the island, positioned to take in a view of the Olympic Mountains, metal hardware coexists with a raised plywood tabletop. “It’s the most used space in the house,” Van Horne says. “They’re constantly hanging around that island and raised table.” The run of cabinets on the angled wall serves as an ample baking center. And the microwave sits within the shelving for Susi’s vast cookbook collection. Since it’s deeper than the books, Van Horne projected the rear end into the entry hall, masking it with a totem pole of family portraits.

If the totem pole evokes the era of the Pacific Northwest’s old-growth forests, so do the rafters, which organize everything in the house. During framing, the contractor kept a model in the middle of the kitchen for reference. It was the easiest way to visualize how all the timbers fit together. For all its apparent complexity, though, the structural system is fairly simple. The north-south ridge of the new construction passes over the rebuilt east-west ridge of the existing house. “The contractor did such a good job prepping for it that the entire frame of the house went up in three hours,” Van Horne says. “Every piece slid together like giant Tinkertoys.”

Long, wide boards on the floors came from a 1950s grade school. The recycled glulams were milled to a ¾-inch thickness and butt-jointed together. And flooring from the old sawmill clads



The dining room steps down to the kitchen addition. Van Horne designed the floor plate 30 inches lower than the original farmhouse so as not to overwhelm it.



the outer walls of the upstairs master suite, perched like a tree house within the sheltering beams. “The sawmill flooring was very cheap to purchase and very expensive to install,” Van Horne says. “It was difficult to finesse wood that was 80 years old. But the carpenters did a cabi-

An office mezzanine overlooks the kitchen. Beyond, the master suite perches in the rafters. Its outer walls are clad in flooring from an old sawmill (left). In the entry (above), a totem pole absorbs the backside of the microwave, tucked into the kitchen’s bookshelves.



The homeowners' cookbook library covers a kitchen wall. A French colander fitted with a light fixture illuminates the raised plywood-and-metal tabletop, elements that satisfy the owners' modernist-industrialist tastes.

holistic approach

netry-level job of mitering the corners.” A gliding barn door inset with Lexan is a playful nod to the modern material world. It closes off the public rooms on the first floor from the mezzanine-level office and the second-floor bedrooms.

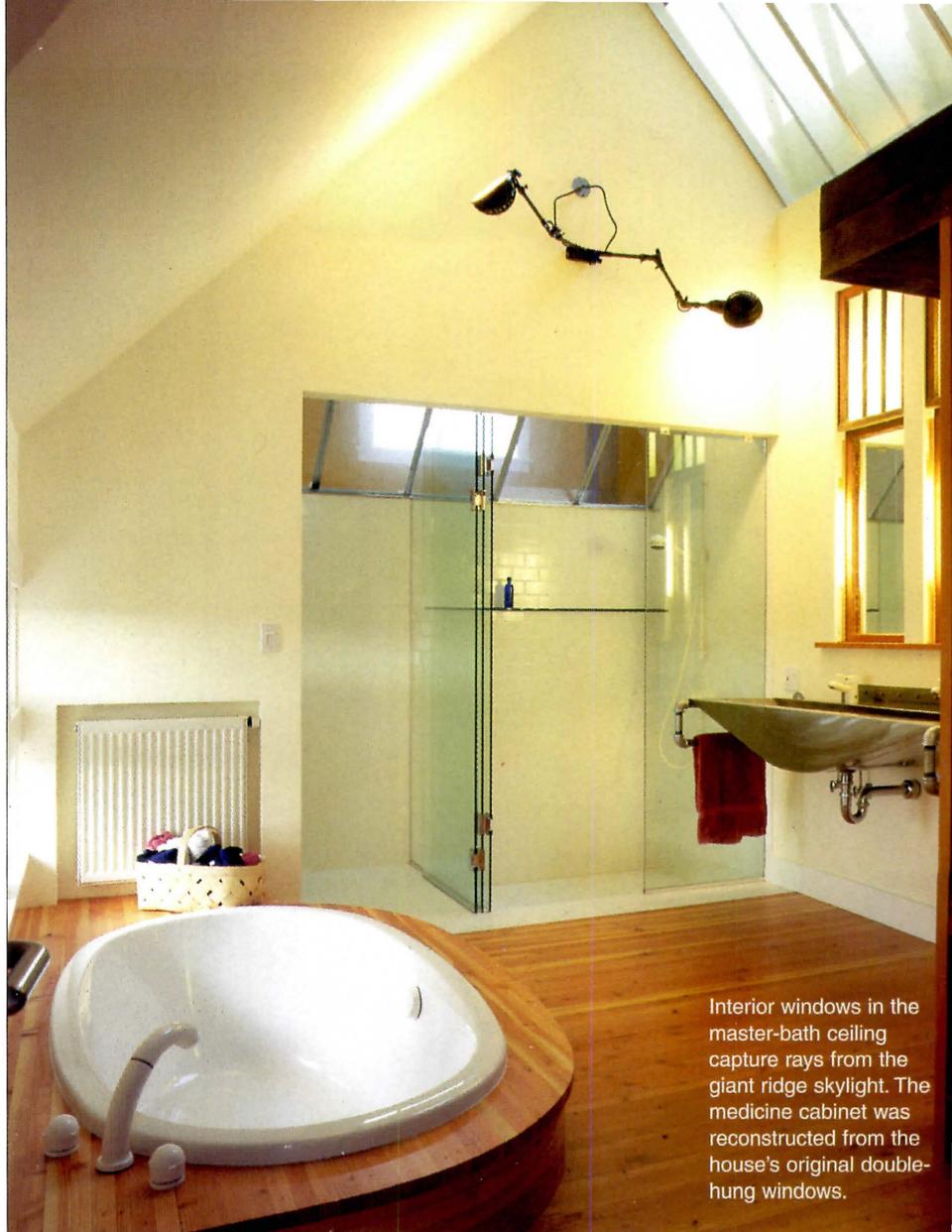
Tucked up under the roof ridge, the master suite is tethered to the house with cantilevered beams. Natural light bounces down through its interior skylights by way of the roof skylight beyond. Low windows bring in a bathtub view of the distant mountains. And the peaked ceilings and complexity of timbers also help to impart the same light-filled, open ambience as in the kitchen.

artful ingenuity

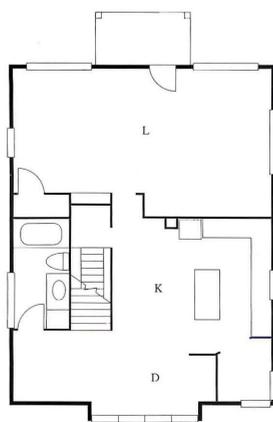
“On every conceivable level,” Van Horne says, “the house was a collaboration between the owners, the contractor, and me.” Susi and Martin’s funky modernist-industrial streak shows up in either custom-designed or doctored off-the-shelf products. The bath’s stainless-steel trough was custom-fabricated. And Seattle designer Kevin Spitcher made lamps out of everything the couple could imagine. Illuminating the bath are desk lamps mounted askew and turned upside down. Conventional colanders cum light fixtures were incorporated into the pot rack above the kitchen island.

Martin’s ingenuity also saved the day for some of the old double-hung windows. “I had to replace all the existing windows,” Van Horne says. “It was a little sad because with the new double-glazing we couldn’t get the fineness and delicacy of the original windows.” Several were reborn as master-bath medicine cabinets, with fluorescent lights recessed into the side channels. Martin made others into a bedroom-vanity mirror.

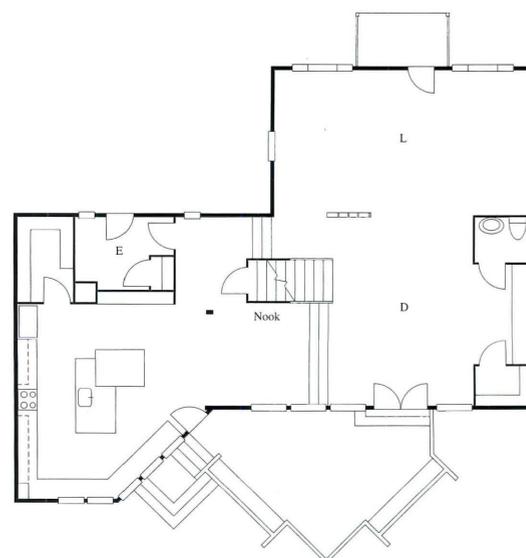
Van Horne’s concept connects the farmhouse, strong and rustic, to its rich Pacific Northwest heritage, but also brings it happily into a new century. Just like the original owners, Martin and Susi no doubt cherish leisurely mornings in their kitchen, watching the light sift down through the latticework of wood beams. “The morning light is pretty magical,” Van Horne says. “It wanders through the structural bracing, touching the kitchen below in small places, as though through the branches of an old forest.”—c.w.



Interior windows in the master-bath ceiling capture rays from the giant ridge skylight. The medicine cabinet was reconstructed from the house’s original double-hung windows.



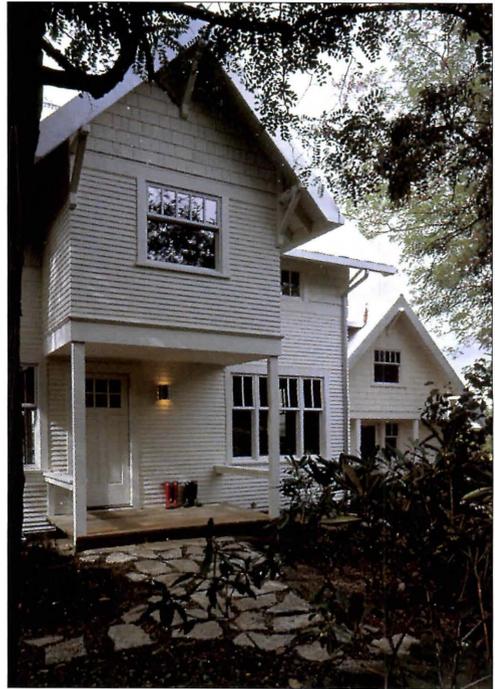
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before



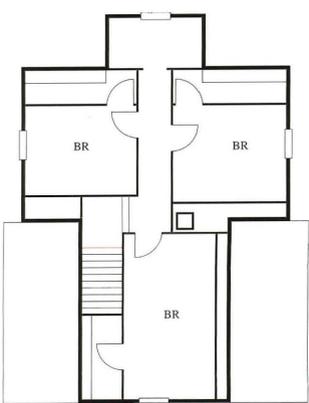
first level
after



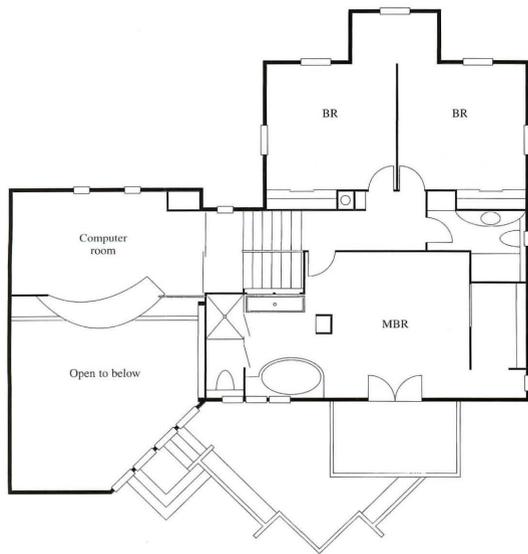
North-south ridge beams supporting the new construction form an intricate canopy over the master bed.



Raising the roof on the turn-of-the-century farmhouse improved its proportions and allowed generous, vaulted ceilings in the bedrooms. Van Horne repeated the gabled roof on the addition's front facade, visible on the right.



second level before



second level after

- project:**
Chuegraf/Pagel residence,
Kirkland, Wash.
- architect:**
Taylor Van Horne, Architect,
Kennedy Meadows, Calif.
- contractor:**
Chandler Construction, Seattle
- size before renovation:**
1,500 square feet
- size after renovation:**
3,000 square feet
- cost per square foot:**
\$233 per square foot

a better space

One fateful morning, architect Ken Miller awoke and realized that his four-bedroom house in Miami no longer worked for him and his wife. With their three grown daughters now out of the house, the couple discovered—like many empty nesters—that their square footage was in all the wrong places.

They wanted a more functional, efficient house—one that would accommodate easy living for themselves, visits from five grandchildren and their parents, and frequent large-scale entertaining. Although they were confident about what they wanted, Ken was a bit intimidated by the prospect of designing his own home for all the world to see. “It’s probably easier to design for a client than it is to design for oneself because people expect something totally unusual,” says the principal of Kenneth Miller Architects in Jupiter, Fla. Even more difficult, he adds, is reconciling and winnowing all those ideas accumulated over time.

open living

But reconcile and winnow he did, using the idea of a farmhouse as his organizing filter. The result is a new 2,600-square-foot open-plan house and a diagonally adjacent 600-square-foot studio/guest house. Both structures emphasize the connection between indoors and out and the collection of natural light in abundance.

The play of geometry and volume is what suggests the farmhouse, he says, and what gives the structure more bang for the square footage. “The house is volumetric,” he explains. “You have the volume of the bath in the master bedroom, which flows into the passage, which be-





To accommodate multiple cooks, Miller designed back-to-back food-prep areas with separate sinks and garbage disposals.

Photos by Sargent Architectural Photography, except where noted.

holistic approach

comes part of the living/dining/kitchen and then the gallery on to the media room and the garage.”

At the heart of the main house is a highly functional and sociable kitchen. “At a dinner party, everyone really wants to participate in an informal way,” says Miller, whose wife, Bobbe, likes to cook and entertain. “It’s a very active social involvement. So the kitchen has to be dimensioned to accommodate that.”

Accordingly, he designed generous work areas for multiple cooks and assistants, with back-to-back food preparation and cleanup zones for extra maneuvering room. In addition to separate sinks, each zone has its own garbage disposal, controlled pneumatically by push buttons on the deck. “You are not involved in electricity when you have wet hands,” he says. “And aesthetically, it looks a lot better than the switches along the back.”

For Miller, obviously, safety is no accident—something he also kept in mind when he designed the overhead cabinets. Their horizontal doors, made of guatambu wood veneer, are counterbalanced to open upward. Busy cooks often leave cabinet doors open, he explains, so this design eliminates the potential for accidents.

His other specifications continue the mix of good sense and refined sensibilities: a sleek, stainless-steel refrigerator with a bottom-mounted freezer; beautiful, durable Ubatuba granite countertops; a black-glass-topped range with halogen burners; and a retracting exhaust vent. Simple, economical choices like laminate base cabinets help balance the high-end, high-gloss specs.

inside outside

A wood floor in the kitchen segues into poured concrete floors elsewhere, scored to resemble random, oversized tiles. The concrete stretches through all the major rooms of the main house and guest house and onto the screened porch and terrace beyond, linking indoors and out. French doors in the kitchen area also connect to the porch and terrace. But abundant windows, skylights, and a clerestory are what really bring the outside in, filling the house with natural light and Florida’s lushly landscaped views.

The clerestory is made of Polygal, a translu-



Large windows and skylights throughout the house scoop in generous natural light. Poured-concrete floors pave the main rooms and the guest house, as well as a screened porch and terrace, linking indoors and out.



Miller had safety in mind when he spec'd overhead cabinets with counterbalanced hinges that open upward. The doors are guatambu wood veneer.

holistic approach



The homeowners wanted the property left as wild as possible so that they and their guests could enjoy lush natural views from the house's many patios.

cent industrial material Miller had fastened to the sides of a truss. "As the sun makes its course during the day, the shadows change and the focus changes," he says. "It's like living in a sundial."

If the living area is a sunroom, the master bath is a greenhouse. Inspired by a trip to Guatemala, Miller sought to re-create a feeling of living and roughing it outdoors. Natural slate tiles in an open shower, a large sloping skylight, and big, leafy plants set the scene. "It was supposed to be a garden bath, but it hasn't achieved that status yet. I am still bringing in plants," the architect jokes.

Miller took a hands-on approach to the house, supervising much of the project with staff members Grant Greyling and Geary Mansfield. Believing that good design doesn't mean big dollars, he selected materials based on their potential rather than their price. He chose plain unfinished Masonite for closet doors and a greenhouse roofing material as a shower panel in the master bath, and he scoured architectural salvage yards for anything of interest.

Although he's accomplished the goals he set, Miller readily admits he may never consider the house done. In a way, he's still reconciling and winnowing a lifetime of ideas. "It's an ongoing project," he says. "As an architect, every time you study your environment, you are always taking away or changing and adding."—*n.f.m.*





Light filters into the house's core through a clerestory made of Polygal, a translucent industrial material. "It's like living in a sundial," Miller says.



Natural slate tiles, a skylight, and leafy plants bring the outdoors in and give the master bath its greenhouse feel.

Kenneth Miller



project:
Private residence, Hobe Sound, Fla.
architect:
Kenneth Miller Architects, Jupiter, Fla.
contractor:
Richard Jacobs, Jupiter
size:
main house 2,600 square feet;
guest house 600 square feet
cost per square foot:
Withheld

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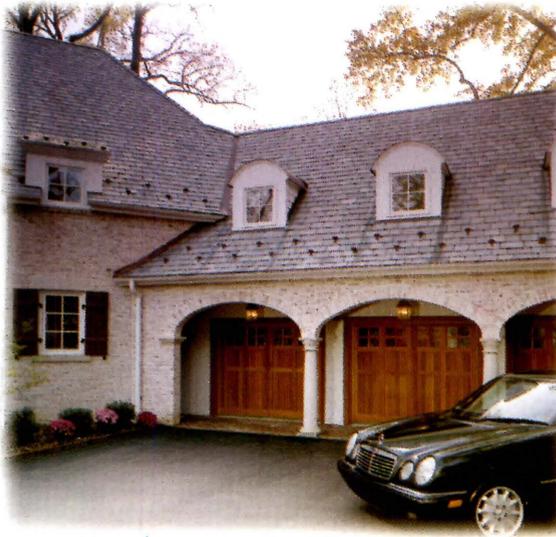
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off the shelf

super bowls

six lovely lavs score big on form and function.



aqua deco

The Cirque steep-walled basin features a tiered design evocative of an ancient Roman amphitheater. The Art Deco-style sink can be installed 2, 4, 6, or 8 inches above the countertop. It measures 18 inches in diameter. Porcher, 800.524.9797; www.americanstandard-us.com.

sea feature

The Mediter-

ranean glass basin

comes with a standard

or flared edge in three sizes:

15 inches diameter by 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep;

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An undermount model is also available. Gravity Glas,

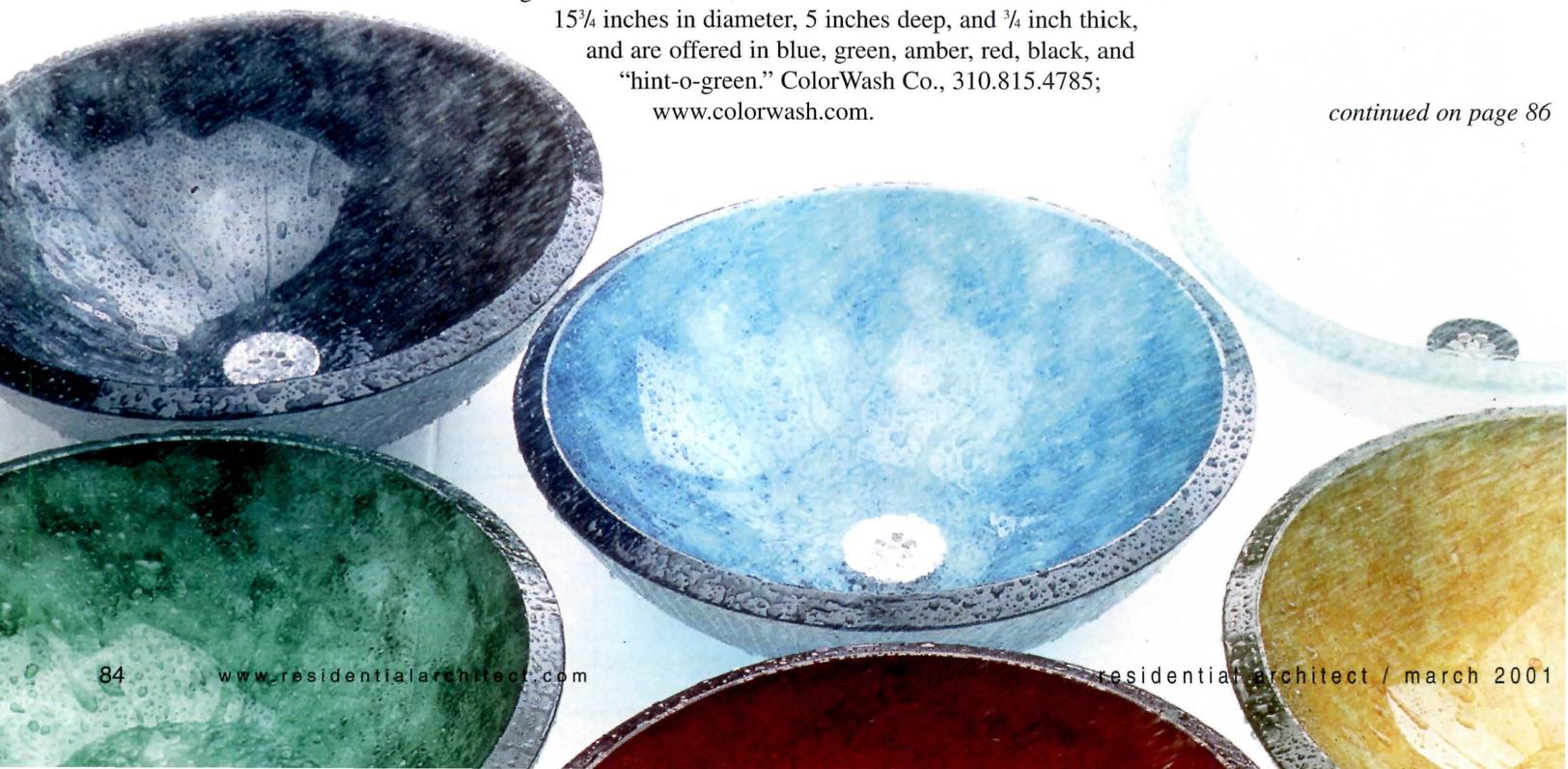
623.334.0808; www.gravityglas.com.

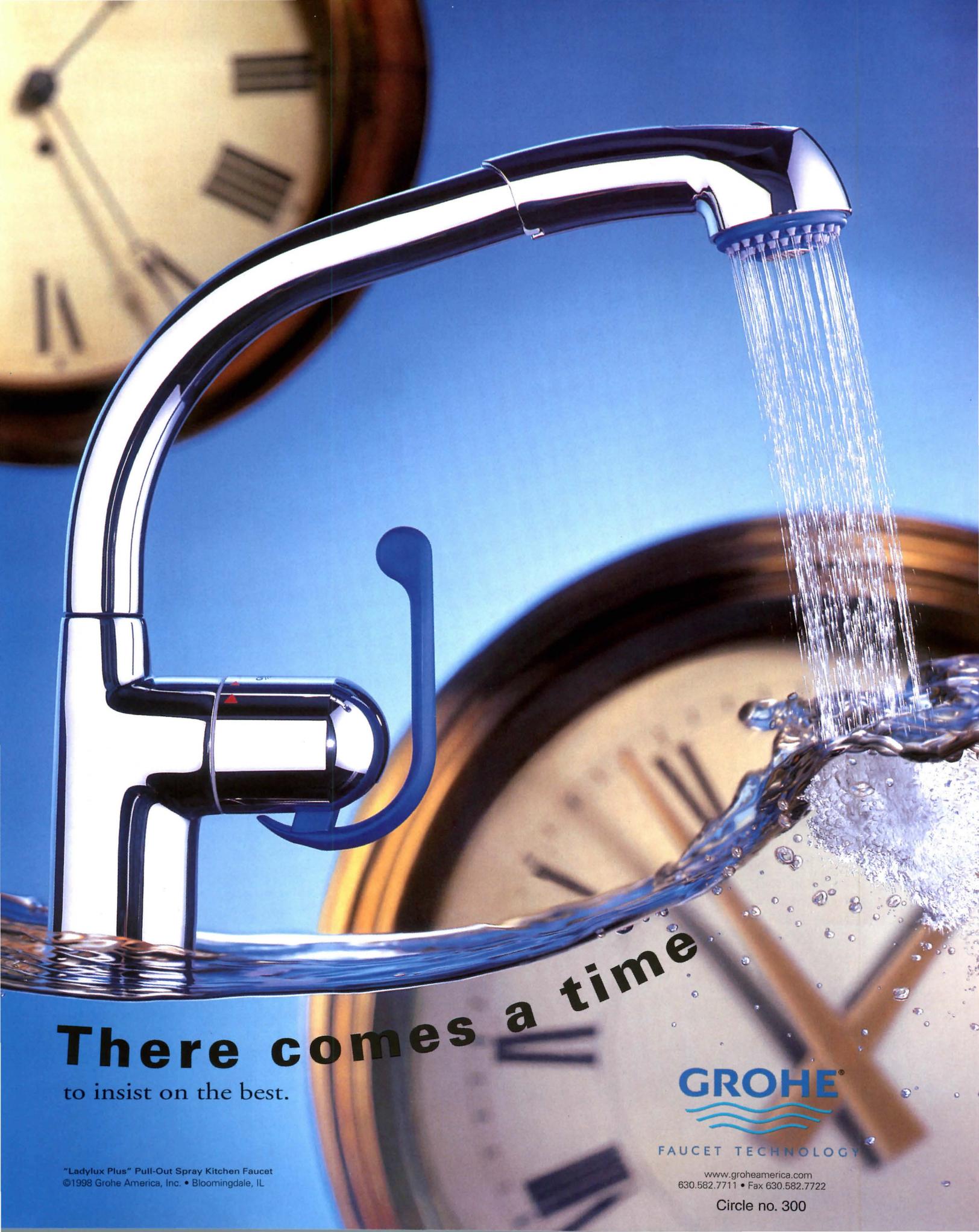


color it mottled

Hot hues create a cool look for these vivid bowls, made of super-annealed glass with a mottled, coated exterior. Watercolors sinks measure 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, 5 inches deep, and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, and are offered in blue, green, amber, red, black, and "hint-o-green." ColorWash Co., 310.815.4785; www.colorwash.com.

continued on page 86





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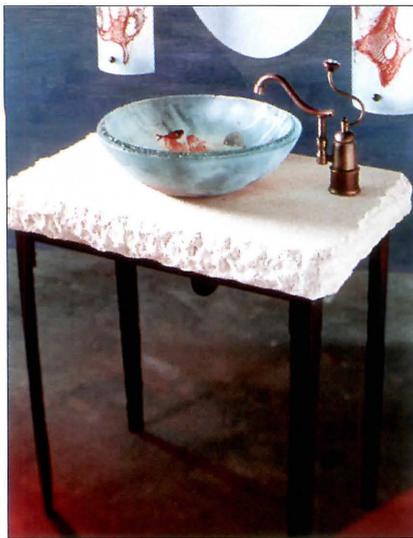
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off the shelf

square one

It's hip to be square. The rectangular-shaped Bateau lavatory is made of vitreous china and features a hard, glossy finish. The unit measures 18¼ inches by 14¾ inches and comes in 17 colors, including sandbar (shown), cobalt blue, clay, almond, earthen white, and copper verde.

Kohler, 800.456.4537; www.kohlerco.com.



fossil fooled

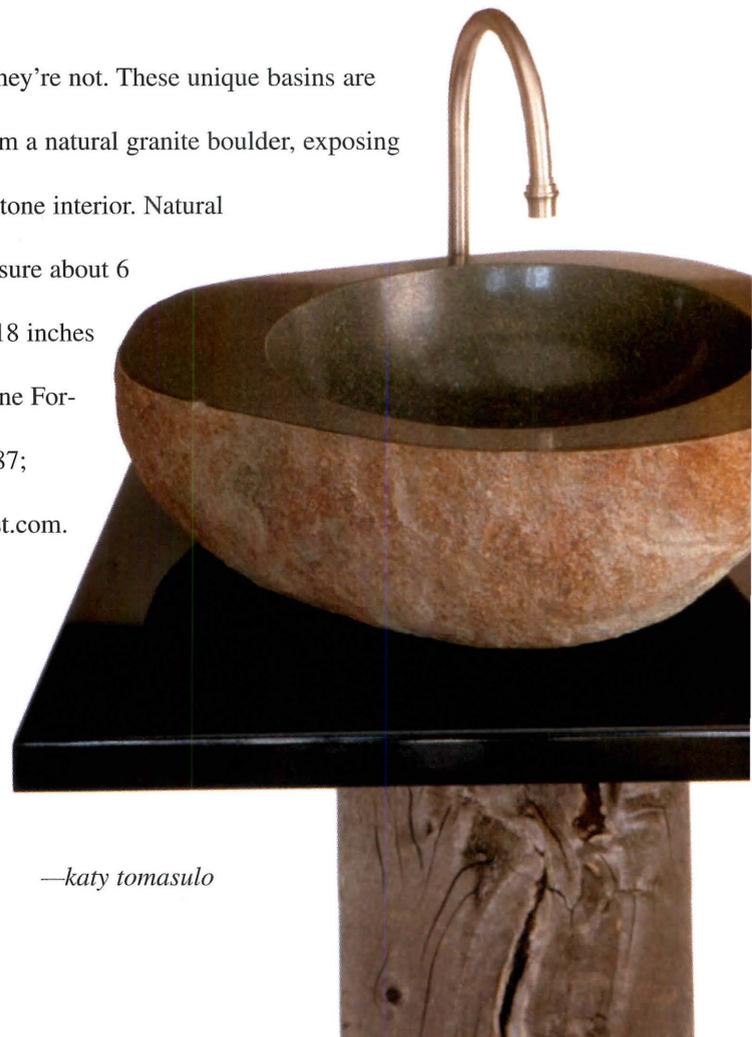
Don't bet on finding duplicates in this sink collection, where a random reaction of minerals, glass, and heat combine to create one-of-a-kind pieces. The handcrafted basins come in 11 styles; above-counter models measure 18 inches in diameter by 5½ inches deep. Shown: Burnished Fossil. Alchemy Glass & Light, 310.836.8631; www.alchemy-glass.com.

rock it

Split coconuts they're not. These unique basins are hand-carved from a natural granite boulder, exposing the green/gray stone interior. Natural

Vessel lavs measure about 6 inches high by 18 inches in diameter. Stone Forest, 888.682.2987;

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—katy tomasulo

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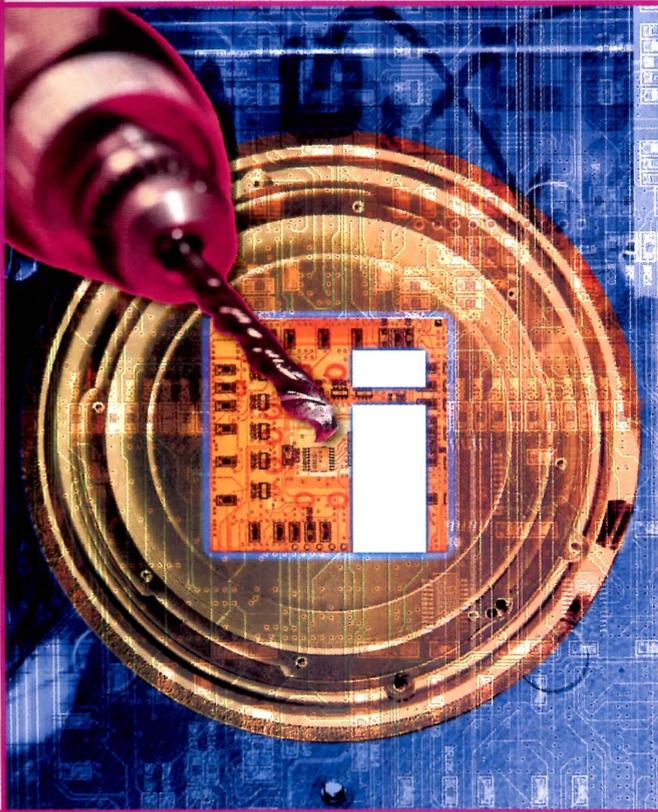
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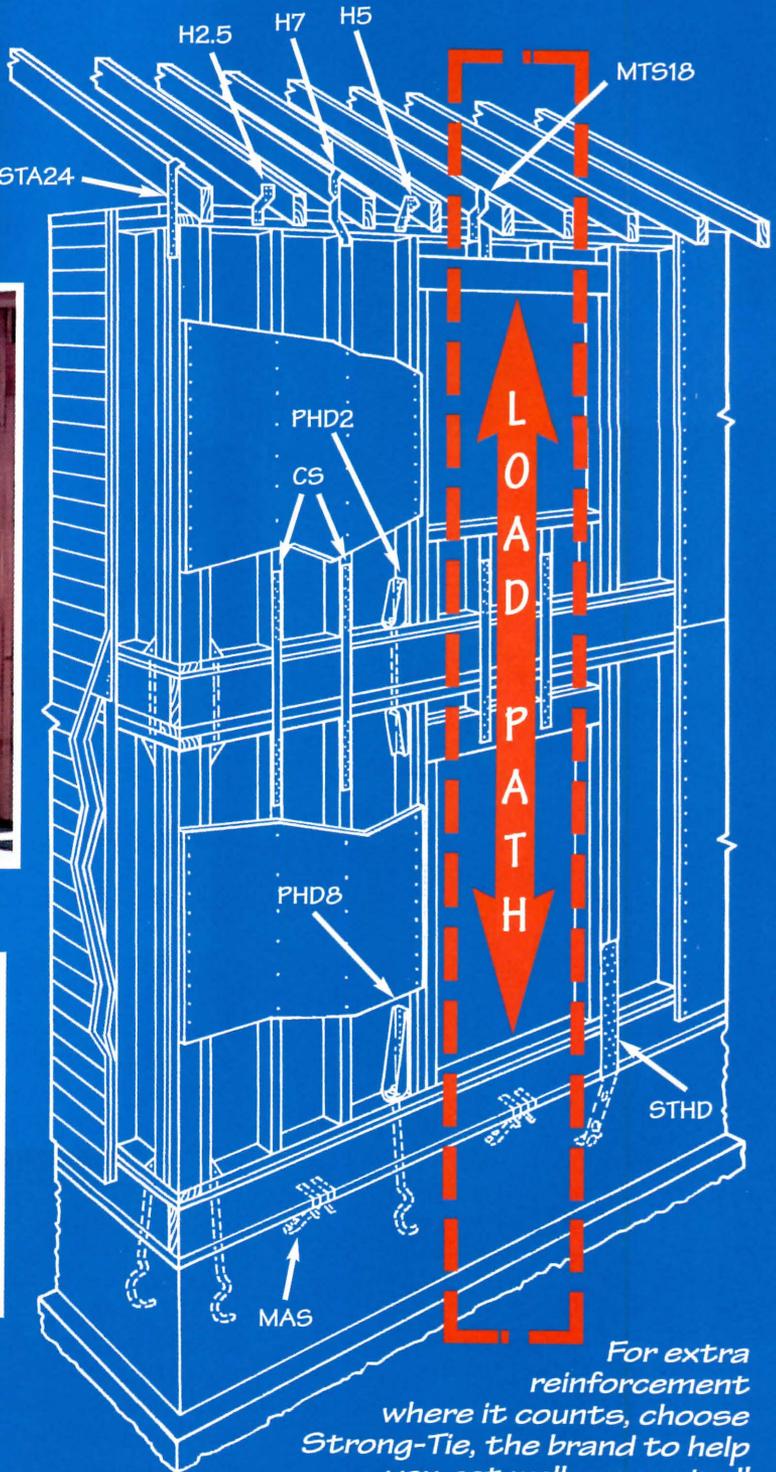
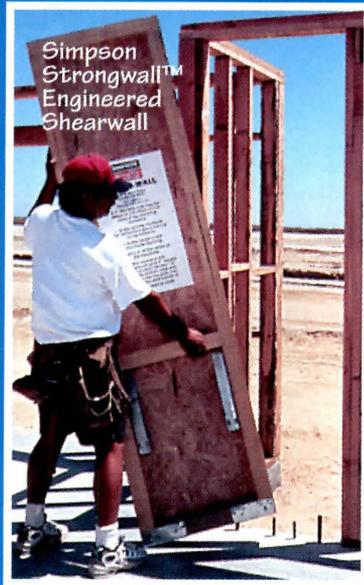
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watch your glass

skillfully specced, glass adds sparkle to kitchens and baths.

by nigel f. maynard

Glass is the second oldest man-made substance after bronze. A ubiquitous material in windows and doors, it's been largely overlooked as a spec elsewhere in the house since the 1980s. But that's starting to change—again. While all-glass houses are still few and far between, a growing number of architects are sliding glass into limited but powerful applications. The most frequent locale for a touch of glass? Kitchens and baths.

True, custom-home clients are not exactly embracing modern architecture these days, but they do have greater tolerance for a high-tech look in their kitchens and baths. In these rooms, a frustrated modernist can let loose a little. What's more, a combination of advancements has made glass an even more practical and stylish choice for residential applications. According to Roger MacPherson, of MacPherson Construction & Design in Sammamish, Wash., glass fabrication technology has improved considerably in the last few years and more products made with glass are available.



Left: Courtesy Joel Berman Glass Studios, photo by Martin Tessler; Right: Courtesy Nathan Allen Glass Studios
Cast glass can be used to striking effect in a variety of applications. Shown: Joel Berman's textured sinks and countertop (left), and Nathan Allan's 3/4-inch countertop over river rock (right).

cast away

For versatility and strength, residential architects most often spec cast glass, a generic term for glass that's been heated in a kiln and shaped in molds. Cast glass may have three-dimensional patterns, textures, tints, or colors, and it can transmit light while providing privacy.

Unlike sandblasted or etched glass—where a layer of the surface is removed—cast glass is nonporous and therefore very forgiving, says Kirby Rea, marketing director for Joel Berman Glass Studios in Vancouver, British Columbia. “With regular flat glass, dirt,

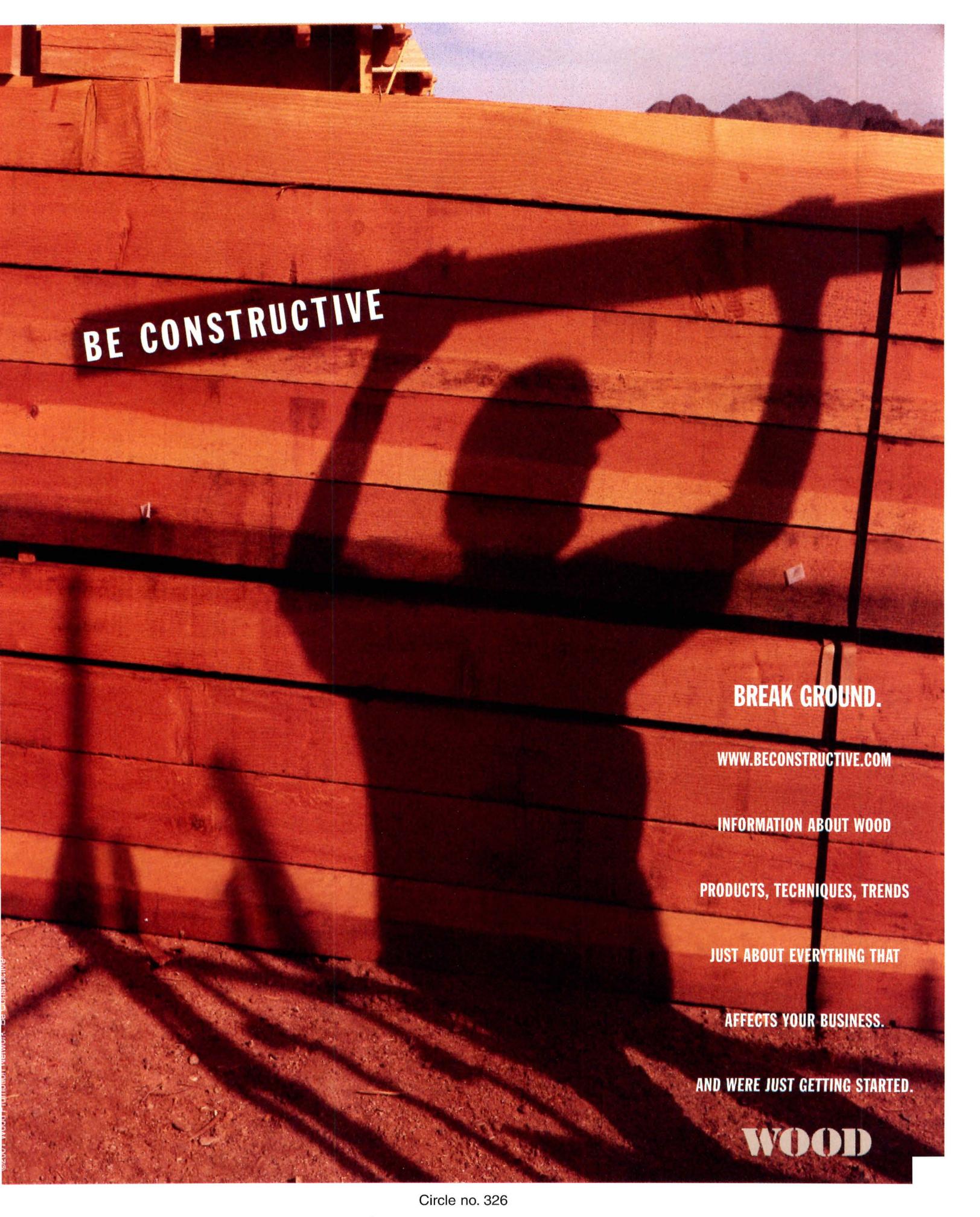
smearing, and dust show up immediately,” says Rea, whose company developed a technique for casting and reclaiming tempered glass. “Cast glass requires almost no maintenance.”

Almost anything is available in glass—sinks, sink pedestals, countertops, shower and cabinet doors, tiles, panels, partitions—but the bath basin is perhaps the most popular. Glass basins come in any color, style, size, and configuration, and the range of manufacturers that offer them is extensive.

Porcher, an upscale division of American Standard in Piscataway, N.J., makes the Glacier line of frosted-

and etched-glass sinks and pedestals. It also produces a line of European-style, above-counter basins in various combinations of materials, like copper fused between layers of iridescent glass. If you prefer an integrated sink and countertop, Denver-based Cherry Creek Enterprises offers the stylish Vitraform laminated-glass counter sink in a number of configurations. And for something different, Los Angeles-based AquaDreams offers a line of vibrant “fusion” sinks whose color is added to the glass while in its liquid state.

These sinks are awash in
continued on page 92



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Ann Sacks' glass tiles come in a style range that includes jewels (left) and transparent or patterned fields (center and right).



high style, but they're not for the faint of budget. A freestanding single basin from Cherry Creek costs about \$1,400, and a Glacier sink and pedestal from Porcher runs about \$3,200. A 21-inch single sink from AquaDreams costs about \$4,000, but your clients will have to pony up \$16,000 for an 85-inch double.

tiling around

Glass tiles are another increasingly popular spec. Available in various colors and sizes, they have qualities



Strong enough for floor applications, glass mosaics are used in Ann Sacks' 9-by-12-foot "rug."

ceramic can only dream of. "What you don't get with typical ceramic tile is depth," says MacPherson, who holds two architectural degrees but is not a licensed architect. "Glass tiles, on the other hand, give you color, translucency, and light." And to create an even more lively space, lighting can be

positioned to hit the tiles in a dramatic way, he adds.

Generally thinner than ceramic, glass tiles can be cast in 1/2-inch-thick sizes for flooring applications. Gerhard Linse, owner and chief designer of Gerhard Linse Designs, a design/build firm in Ottawa, does not generally recommend glass tiles for large expanses of floor, but says they're fine for accent work. "They should be used in small areas where scratching will be minimal," he says.

Tiles vary in price, but they can quickly fatten a lean budget. Old Hancock Glass Tile in Nashua, N.H., for example, offers hand-pressed, 100 percent recycled-glass tiles in custom and stock designs at \$18 for a 4-by-4-inch piece. Yasemin Cut Glass in Larkspur, Colo., fabricates hand-cut and acid-polished, rock-crystal tiles that range in price from \$9.50 to \$95 per tile. The tiles are available clear in 6-by-6-inch and 12-by-12-inch sizes or with a sterling-silver, 24K gold, or custom-painted backing.

Ultraglas in Chatsworth, Calif., manufactures embossed glass tiles in standard and custom colors, patterns, and designs that cost \$60 to \$90 per square foot. And Portland, Ore.-based Ann Sacks Tile & Stone has 12 lines of glass tiles ranging in price from \$5 to \$150 per square foot. Sizes go up to

2-foot-square panels, and the company says pieces can be custom ordered in 3/4-inch thickness for floor applications. Custom tiles can also be ordered from Nathan Allan Glass Studios in Richmond, British Columbia, and from Joel Berman, whose Tactiles line is available at Ann Sacks showrooms.

building blocks

Glass block is a low-tech product recently reincarnated in high-end applications. "People remember the 1950s glass block in the basement window," says MacPherson, "so they see it as an inexpensive product. But we use it as a focal point in the kitchen and bath because it is very versatile."

Architect Howard Goldstein is also a big fan. "I spec a lot of it, often in kitchens as a window, but also as a backsplash between the countertop and the cabinet," says the principal of Washington, D.C.-based Schick Goldstein. "It also works well in the bathroom as a divider between the shower and the main bath."

Glass block is a bargain—from \$3 to \$5 per block, depending on the thickness and pattern, says Kristi Crapo for Pittsburgh Corning Glass Block in Pittsburgh. But installation adds to the cost dramatically, and truly unique and complex designs require a skilled mason.

Profilit (or channel glass) is another way to integrate glass partitions in kitchens and baths. It's a translucent, linear cast-glass structural wall manufactured in Europe and distributed here by Westcrowns in Shallotte, N.C. The system is made of supporting glass channels within an extruded metal perimeter frame, but it does not need horizontal or vertical supports, says Sam Wright, vice president of sales and marketing for Westcrowns.

Lorcan O'Herlihy, who was the first to spec the product in this country about 10 years ago, has been using it extensively in his practice. "The product is ideal for separating kitchens from living areas, bedroom walls, and bathrooms," says the principal of Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects in Culver City, Calif. "It comes in different colors and transparencies, so you have privacy while you bring in light."

Profilit is not for the budget bound, however. Installation cost varies from region to region, but Wright says you can expect your clients to pay anywhere from \$35 to \$55 per square foot installed—sans fancy and complex configurations.

tread lightly

Though a greater temptation than ever, glass is a challenging spec, warns

continued on page 94



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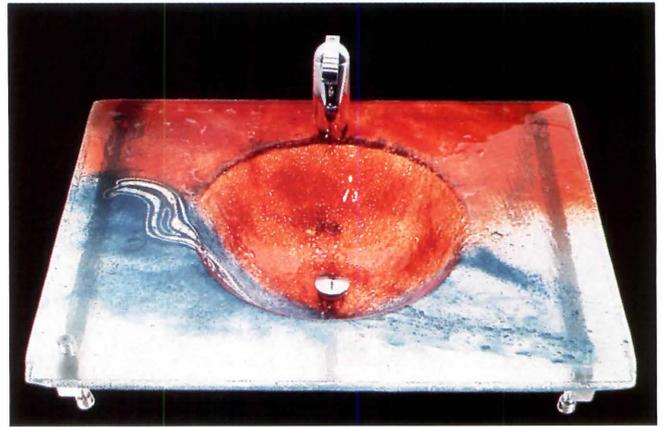
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MacPherson. It's very expensive, and you must know what it can and cannot do. Fortunately, there are cost-cutting measures that architects can apply. For one, show some restraint. Unless you're Philip Johnson, a little goes a long way. Says Rea, "You can make glass tiles more effective as a focal point—as accents in a floor, or jewels in a ceramic-tiled wall." Also, using larger panels and clear glazes keeps the cost down, he adds.

Goldstein claims that using prefabricated glass block panels is a good cost-controlling measure. "The

prefabricated panels can be installed by a carpenter instead of a mason," he says. Some manufacturers, like Pittsburgh Corning, offer prefabricated shower systems that cost less than their standard products.

Architects must also understand the dynamics of glass, says Barry Mappelink, director of Nathan Allan Glass Studios. For instance, with countertops, they must be mindful of the substrate because it will show through the glass. And countertops should be spec'd in at least a ¾-inch thickness of untempered glass, which will allow



This color-fused sink from AquaDreams is beautiful and vibrant—but it will cost your clients about \$4,000.

them to be repaired if they sustain small damage. On the other hand, Mappelink says, for safety reasons most building codes require tempered glass for shower doors and partitions.

Glass is a splendid blend of form and function. Its transparency enables it to

divide space without conquering it, its depth and faceting add vitality and visual interest even in minute amounts, and its wide appeal makes it an easy client pleaser. No wonder so many architects are taking a shine to it—all over again. *ra*



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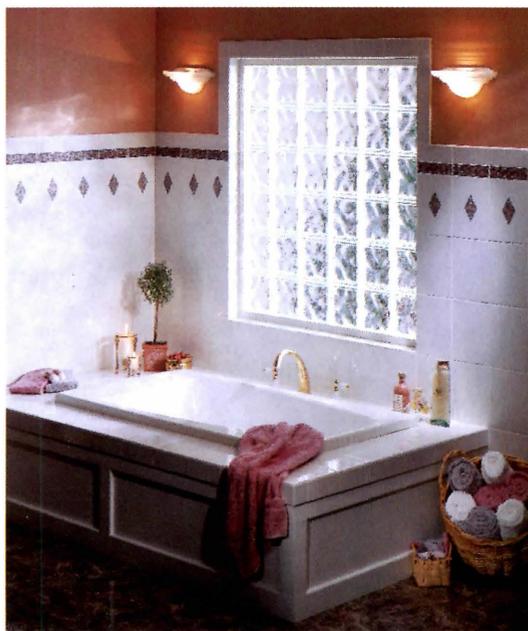
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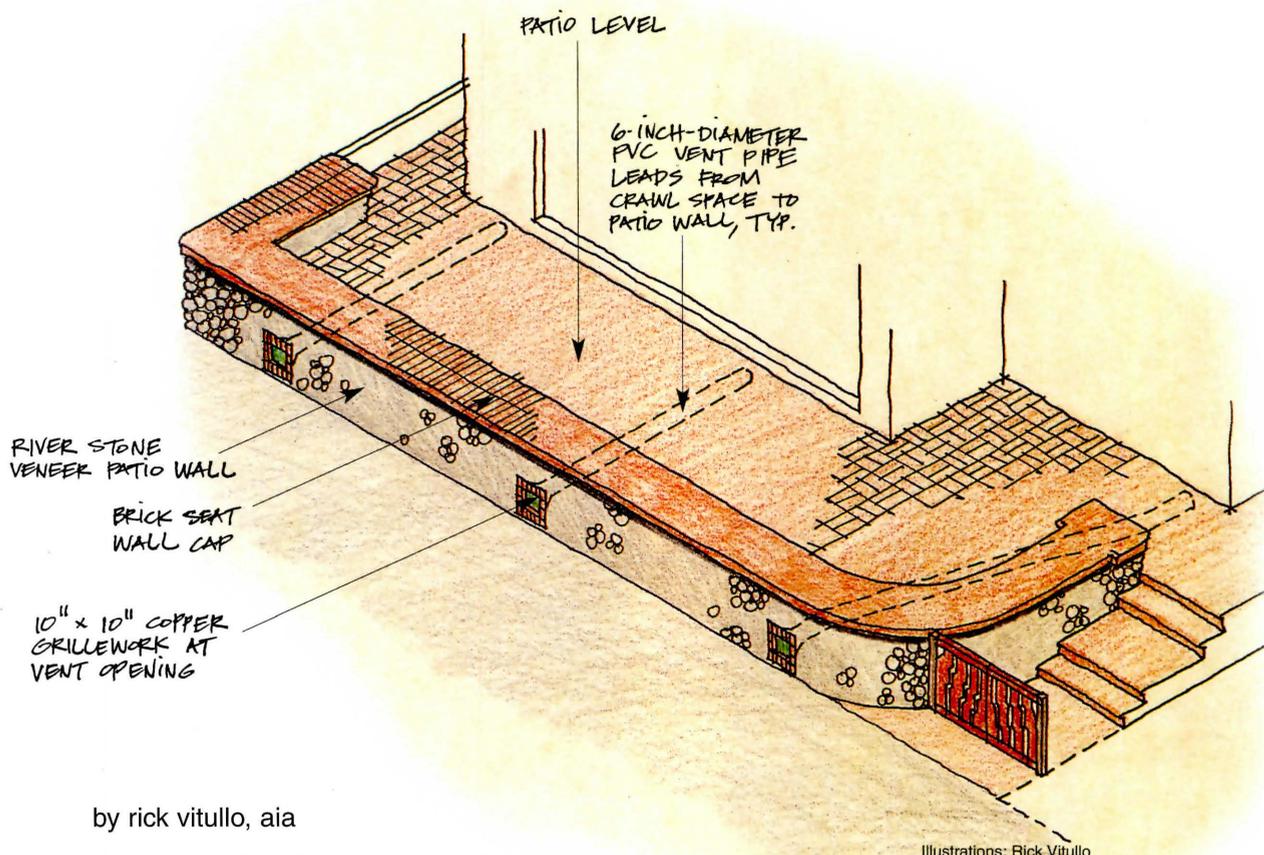


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hands on

giving vent

a cagey solution to a tricky crawl-space conundrum.



Illustrations: Rick Vitullo

by rick vitullo, aia

The first thing visitors encounter when approaching the Arts and Crafts bungalow that architect Michael Corcoran of Newport Beach, Calif., designed for local clients is a 47-inch-high patio wall made of river stone veneer. Punctuating this wall are three Greene & Greene-inspired vent covers. Artfully concealed behind them lies the architect's resourceful solution to a tricky problem: how to vent the house's crawl space without interfering with a 10-foot-wide walk-out patio that extends all the way to the front property line.

Initially, Corcoran had a very particular idea for how he wanted the project to look from the street. He wanted a slab-on-grade, negating any need for vents, and he wanted a walk-out patio in front. "I wanted a hard-surface patio," he says, "and I wanted it to act like a front yard—a people-watching space right off the living room." During preliminary design, however, he discovered that the house's first floor needed to be raised above grade. This complicated his plans for the patio.

Corcoran decided to raise the patio along with the house
continued on page 100

The Uniform Building Code mandates a minimum requirement of venting all four corners of a house. Corcoran installed a fifth vent in the middle of the front of the house. The PVC vent pipes run from the house, under the patio, to the front patio wall. Two of the pipes are 10 feet long; the third pipe, which nearly reaches the entry gate, is 16 feet long.

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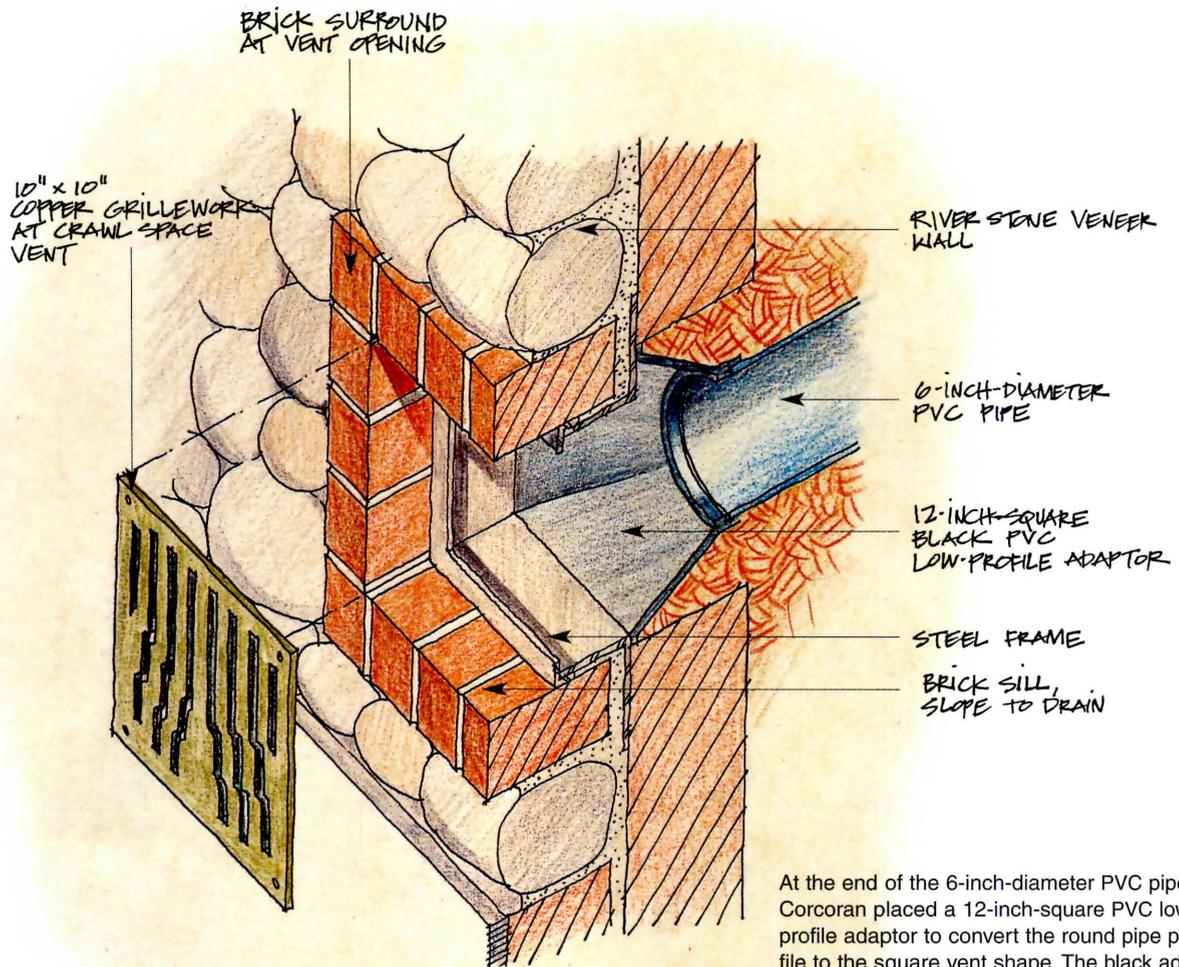
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At the end of the 6-inch-diameter PVC pipe, Corcoran placed a 12-inch-square PVC low-profile adaptor to convert the round pipe profile to the square vent shape. The black adaptor makes the recess behind the vent invisible from the street.

to keep its “walk-out” nature intact. Because that precluded the use of conventional front foundation wall vents, he conceived the alternative arrangement illustrated here: 6-inch-diameter PVC pipes buried beneath the 30-inch-high raised patio. The pipes vent air from the house’s crawl space out to the street. The graceful vent covers—10-inch by 10-inch copper grillework fabricated in a gently curved “cloud lift” motif, set 3 inches back within a brick frame—conceal the pipes. (The rear crawl space vents are set directly within the foundation wall.)

In the end, raising the ele-

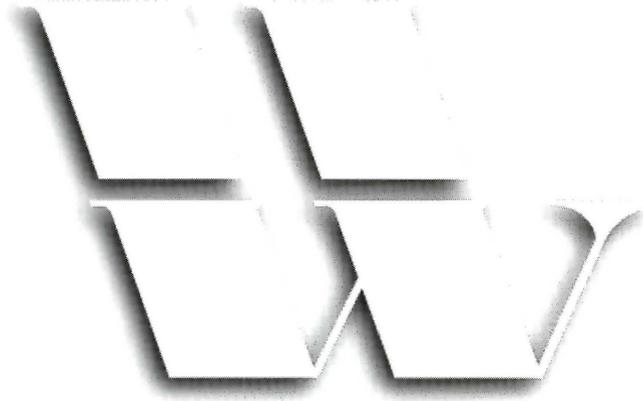
vation enhanced the entire house. The humble bungalow now assumes a more commanding presence on the street, affording the owners a better view of the Pacific Ocean. In addition, the architect gained a vented crawl space for installation of wood joists and HVAC ductwork.

And, thanks to clever detailing, Corcoran’s solution to the venting problem works as well aesthetically as it does functionally, blending flawlessly with the house’s Craftsman detailing. *ra*

Rick Vitullo, AIA, is principal of Vitullo Architecture Studio, Washington, D.C.

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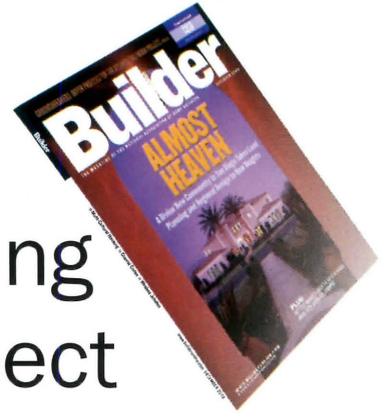
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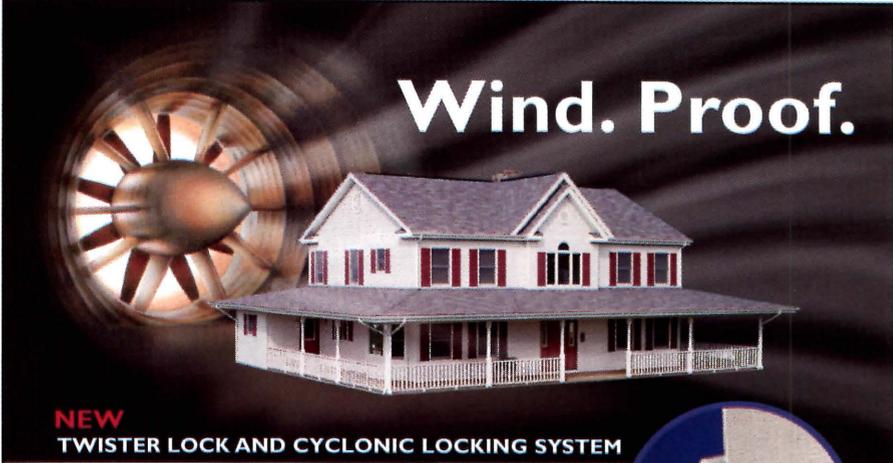
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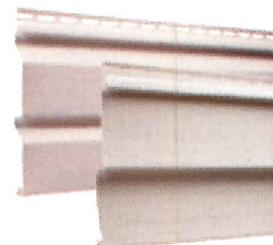
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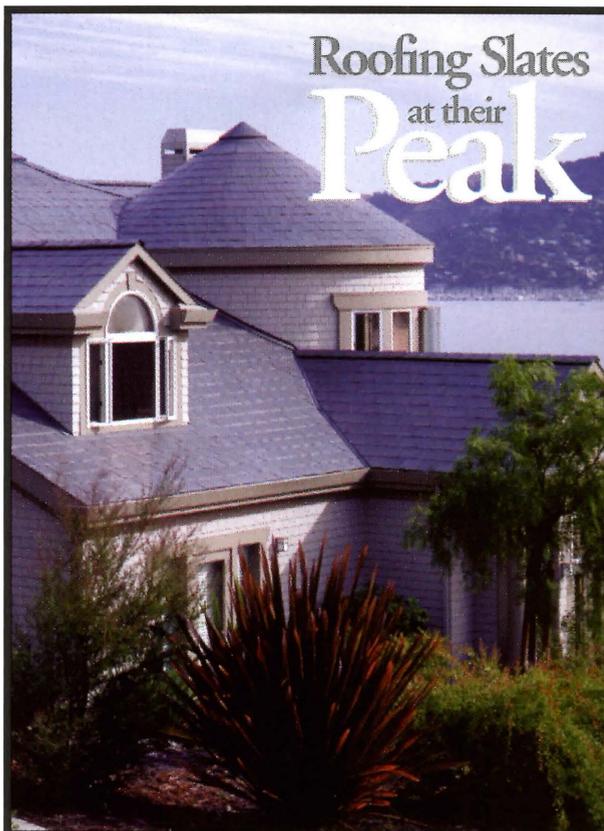


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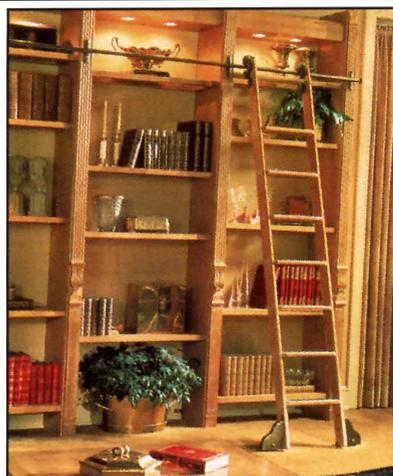
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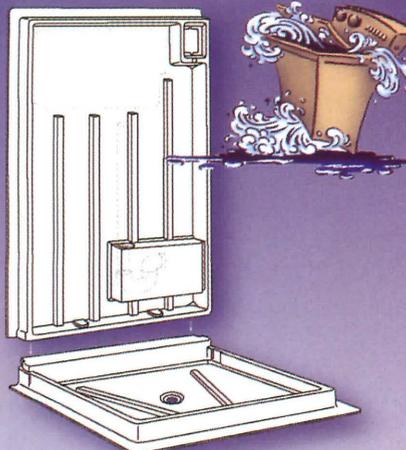


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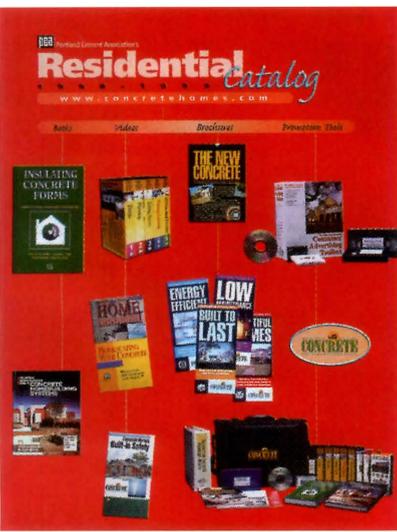
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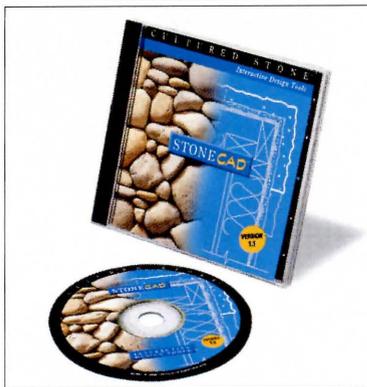


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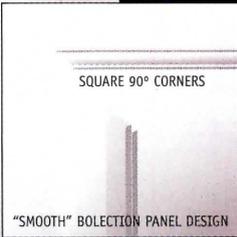
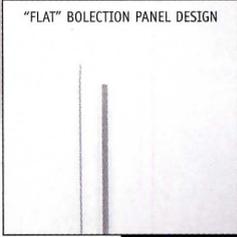
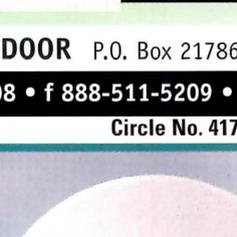


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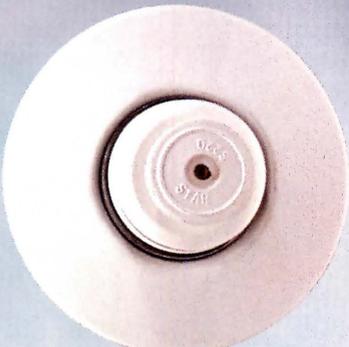
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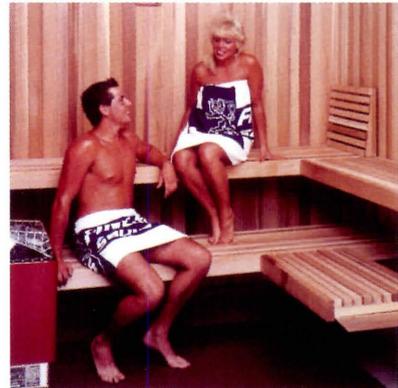


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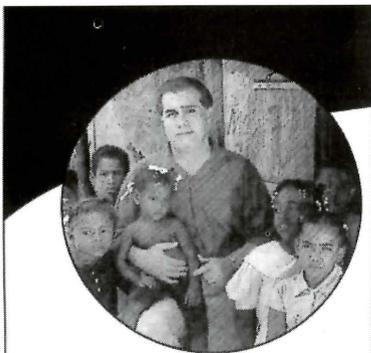
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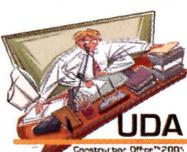
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michael marshall

What is the best thing about being an architect?

When, with input from your client, you come up with a design and see it executed. I love the collaborative process.

What's the worst thing?

Getting paid. I mean the administrative side of it.

If you weren't an architect, what would you be?

Filmmaker, car designer, fashion designer. Something creative.

Do you practice modern or traditional architecture?

We try to do modern and contemporary work. I have always felt comfortable approaching traditional work, but at Yale, I studied under modern masters like Frank Gehry and James Stirling. I kind of see myself like Wynton Marsalis. He plays classical music and he plays jazz. The modern work is jazz; we get to improvise and say what we want to say. And the classical work is just being in the Washington area.

Do you encounter difficulties as an African-American architect?

I have been very lucky because I get the type of jobs a lot of African Americans don't get. Eighty percent of my residential work comes from nonblack clients. I want to start breaking into commercial work and that is a who-you-know kind of thing.

What car do you drive?

A Porsche Boxster—and not because I am a speed demon. It's for the design. The Italians design cars with their hearts.



Tom Wolff

What do you hate spending money on?

Pokemon cards. They're valueless things.

What project are you most proud of?

I have two. In Chevy Chase, Md., we designed a house around the clients' art collection. We organized the rooms as a pavilion off the gallery. We also did a project in Washington, D.C., geared around an

art collection, where we put two apartments together [shown above].

What's your dream project?

I would love to do a residential project where the client had paintings from only one artist, and we had to design the house in collaboration with the collection. *ra*

Michael Marshall is principal of Michael Marshall Architecture in Washington, D.C.