A man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a blue shirt and a brown patterned vest, is smiling and leaning against a wooden post. In the background, there is a wooden building with large windows and a roof with solar panels.

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Nearly 15 years ago, Ron and Janice Ohmes bought a piece of property on the shoreline of the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. This would be the site of their dream retirement home. It had expansive forests, rolling hills and more than 1,300 miles of shoreline, providing magnificent, breathtaking views of a manmade masterpiece. Now all they needed was to capture the beauty of this landscape in another manmade creation, their home.

While the “Ohmeses brought me a list of spaces that they wanted to include in their home,” said Darren Stross, project architect from Lepique and Orne Architects, Inc. in Phoenix, AZ, “they wanted concrete masonry to be the primary building material.”

The house would serve a dual purpose—as a primary home for the Ohmeses and a vacation retreat for their growing family and close friends.

The two-story structure is almost two homes in one. The lower level became the residence exclusively for the Ohmeses, and the upper level became the vacation retreat. Each level has a separate entrance and access to the several shared spaces such as the laundry area and mudroom.

The design was influenced by the prairie-style architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright which is evident in the roofline as

well as in the materials and organic building form. The concrete masonry units were produced in a sandstone color to blend with the natural stone on site. The block was installed in a random ashlar pattern to create a look similar to stone.

The walls of the house were constructed with 6-inch loadbearing concrete masonry units with a split-face veneer. And, there were approximately 10 to 15 different shapes used on the exterior of the home to create the random pattern.

“All of the block were made at the same time to ensure a color match, so you pretty much had to know in advance how much block in each shape was needed,” said Robert Heitkamp Sr. of Heitkamp Masonry. He thought about the building in areas of 32 square feet and determined the amount of each block needed for each area.

The buildings, encompassing more than 7,000 square feet, were built on site in two phases—the garage followed by the main house. There was an existing house, cabana and carport on site prior to the beginning of construction.



Portions of the cabana and carport were reused when constructing the new garage. The garage contains separate living accommodations as well as an indoor parking area.

In fact, the Ohmeses were able to live in the new garage after the existing house was demolished and while the main house was under construction.

Although a separate structure, the garage design is the same as that of the house in style and material. The garage steps down the hill to a masonry retaining wall that ties it back to the main house.

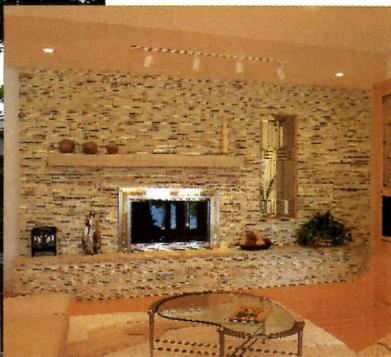
Environmental Qualities

The lake itself was built in the midst of the Great Depression primarily to provide power to the St. Louis area.

Harnessing that same type of power, a geothermal system, was installed to heat and cool the house. When installed, the system, which uses a technology that relies on the earth’s natural thermal energy, was run through a well on site. It was then taken through a cave on site that had filled with water 30-feet deep after the lake was built. The temperature at this depth remains constant at about 50 to 52 degrees. Using this type of system, along with the natural thermal properties of the concrete masonry, allows the home to be very energy efficient.

“The Ohmeses wanted green architecture,” Stross said. Windows with southern exposure were used to bring heat

Concrete Masonry Makes



There was a lot of step work between the segmental retaining walls. The steps were poured with a form, and the pavers were overlaid on concrete.

"These types of concrete pavers are the best material to use," said Bill Mersman, president of Res Com Inc. in St. Louis, who helped with the

paver design. "They outlast the traditional poured concrete sidewalks and aesthetically you could not select a better product. The color selection is unlimited and you can't get the same look from colored concrete."

"There is a lot of ground shifting in our climate," Mersman said. "These pavers allow for the shifting without cracking. In addition, replacing a paver, in case of a problem, is much simpler than with other materials as well. One paver can be removed and replaced and still blend with the existing pavers."

Concrete Masonry Inside and Out

The house highlights the versatility of concrete masonry with its many uses in the project. Concrete masonry was utilized as an exterior finish as well as an interior one.

For example, a ledge-style cultured stone was used in sheathing the fireplace. Burnished block was used to finish the exercise and pool area adjacent to the master suite. Concrete masonry units were even used as part of the foundation at the fireplace.

The Ohmeses' vision was to build something that would last a long time. The durability of the material will allow that to happen. "Concrete masonry allowed us to use materials that gave the home greater integrity than other building materials," Stross said.

"The house is a work of art. There are only one or two like it in the country," Heitkamp said.

The final result captured the tremendous views of the site. Because the concrete masonry was used in a way respectful of its surroundings, it allowed the house itself to become a breathtaking sight.

"It was a pleasure, honor and challenge to create a very wonderful building, while fulfilling a client's dream. The project was auspicious, but not overwhelming to the environment," Stross said.

Ohmes was able to capture that feeling in much simpler terms.

"It is a dream come true," he said.



into the house, overhangs provided shade and access was provided for natural ventilation. "It is a good example of passive solar heating," Stross said.

All of the windows in the house have double-paned glass, also used for energy savings. In addition, glass block was used in many of the private areas as well as in the pool area to allow for natural light.

Surrounding Landscape

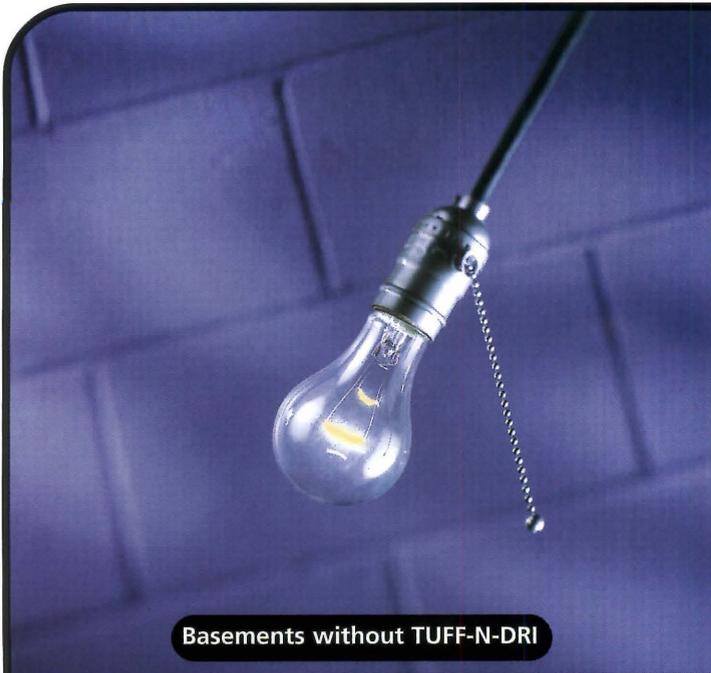
To create a uniform look, block retaining walls were used throughout the site for landscaping. The segmental retaining wall system allowed the walls to be constructed without mortar or concrete footings. Instead, the concrete units, produced in a color to match the house, were stacked on a shallow granular leveling pad.

Installation of the units is easy and economical, and the walls are durable and structurally sturdy with the ability to withstand minor earth movement and settling.

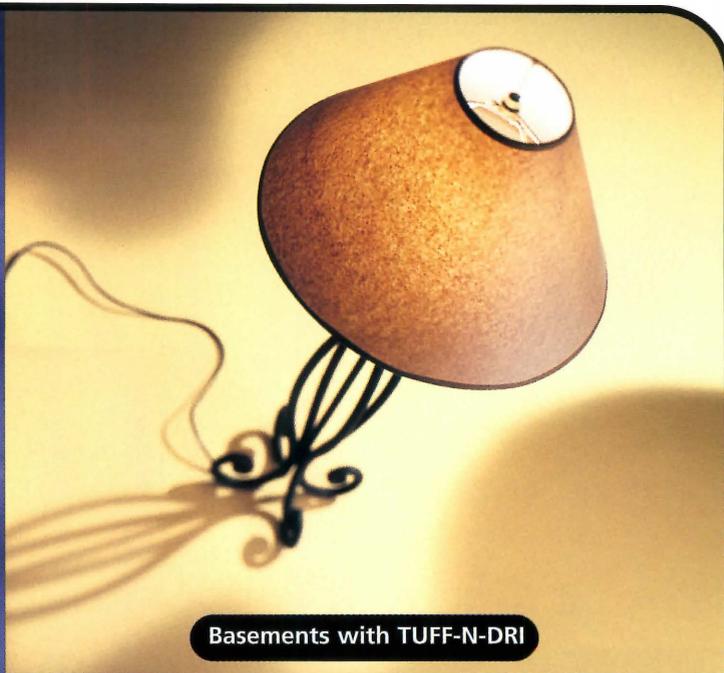
In addition, more than 4,000 square feet of interlocking concrete pavers were installed throughout the site. The pavers, produced in earth tones, were installed in a Venetian parquet pattern.

On the patio, the pavers were laid over a 4-inch concrete slab. On the driveway and the walk areas, the pavers were installed over an 8-inch rock base. In addition, the pavers were also installed over the steps on site.

a Dream Come True



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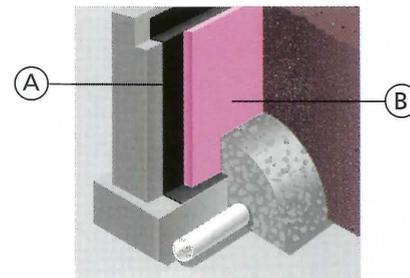
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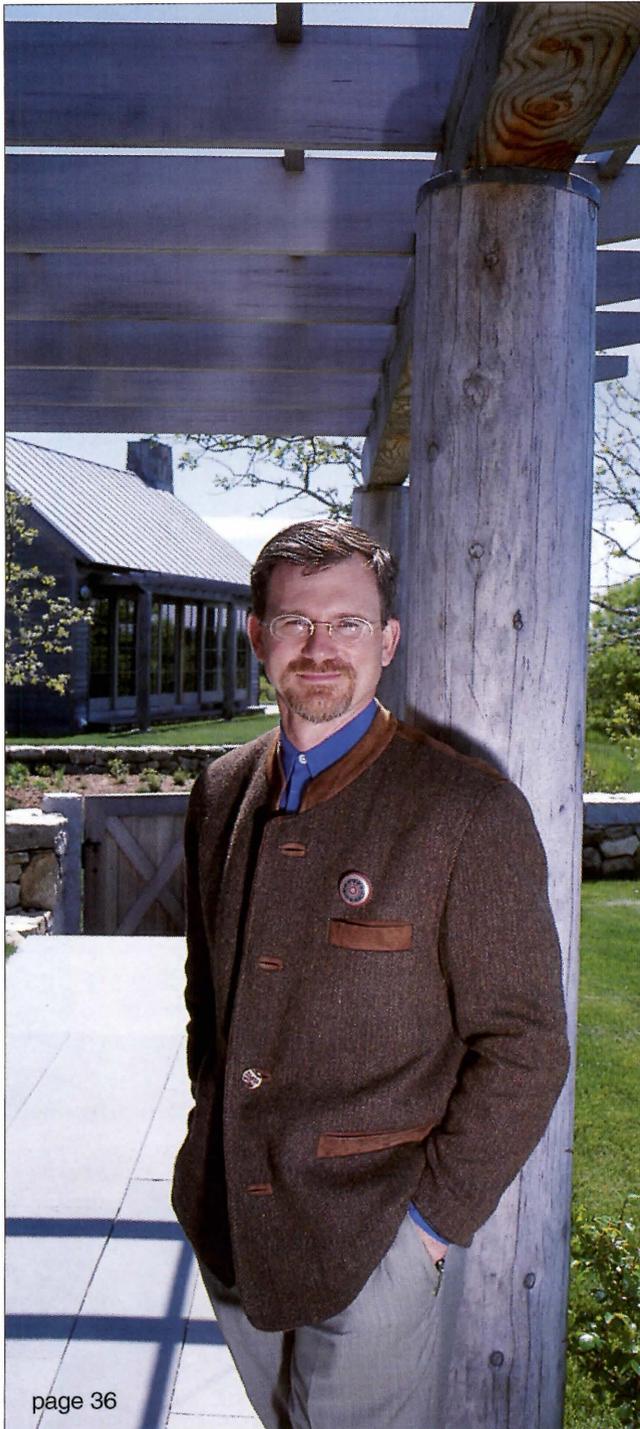
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Home Building's Tradeshow and Conference, July 24-July 27

Bay Area Housing Tour—North Bay
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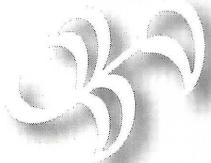


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July 2001



PCBC® 2001

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**Creating the Not So Big House—
Design Tailored to the Way We Really Live**
Wednesday, July 25, 1:20 p.m.—2:20 p.m.
Included in full conference registration.

San Francisco, Moscone Center Location TBD
In her groundbreaking book, *The Not So Big House*, acclaimed architect Sarah Susanka challenged the cultural perception that bigger is better in residential architecture. Her follow-up book, *Creating the Not So Big House*, is the blueprint in action. Get an up-close look at houses throughout North America designed according to Not So Big principles, representing a rich variety of styles, all filled with details tailored to the lifestyles of today's buyers—not the lifestyles of previous generations.

Sarah Susanka is a leading advocate for the repopularization of residential architecture across the United States. She is a best-selling author and a regular columnist for *Fine Homebuilding Magazine*. In January of 2000, she was selected as one of the 100 Global Leaders for Tomorrow by *Newsweek* magazine.

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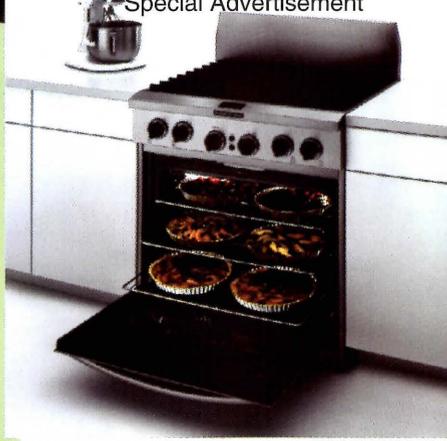
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from the editor

heirloom houses

shouldn't you design houses worth keeping?

by s. claire conroy

Whatever kind of house you design and build, chances are it's going to be around for a while. Houses are not disposable goods, intended to be used and then cast aside. Or are they?

Have you ever been to Ikea? The Swedish-based store fills an important niche in the U.S. home-furnishings market. It provides us with solid, decently made case goods in roughly three price ranges and quality grades: lower, middling, higher. The furniture designs are simple and bland enough not to offend the masses. The company solves a real problem (i.e., I need a dining table immediately, and I can't wait for the perfect, beautiful one) with expediency. The trouble is, no matter how much time and money I saved buying that table, it was a poor long-term investment. This won't be the table my family hands down through generations. It won't prove and appreciate with age.

Much of today's housing is like furniture from Ikea: generic, decently made, expedient. Its character and charm are not likely to improve with age. When it no longer solves the problem, the owners will discard it for

something different. It is a poor emotional investment.

How do you design a house worth keeping? If you think about that table again, the answers are obvious. Something worth keeping is functional, beautifully made from lovely materials, and has strong personal associations. Those qualities are what make an heirloom—something generations will find valuable and useful.

This month's cover architect, Mark Hutker, has designed more than 200 custom homes and renovations on Martha's Vineyard. Of them, only three have been sold. They're keepers—intentionally so. He disdains what he calls "trophy homes," hollow, heartless houses designed primarily to impress the outside world. His mission is to build heirloom houses.

Yes, his houses also solve problems. In fact, he says, the more problems, the better: "We seek constraints—client, program, zoning, site—and we turn them into opportunities." With his houses, beauty and value emerge from the unique blend of those particulars. They also come from a close connection to place, right down to the color of the window trim. "There's a certain red we'll use that matches the island's indigenous

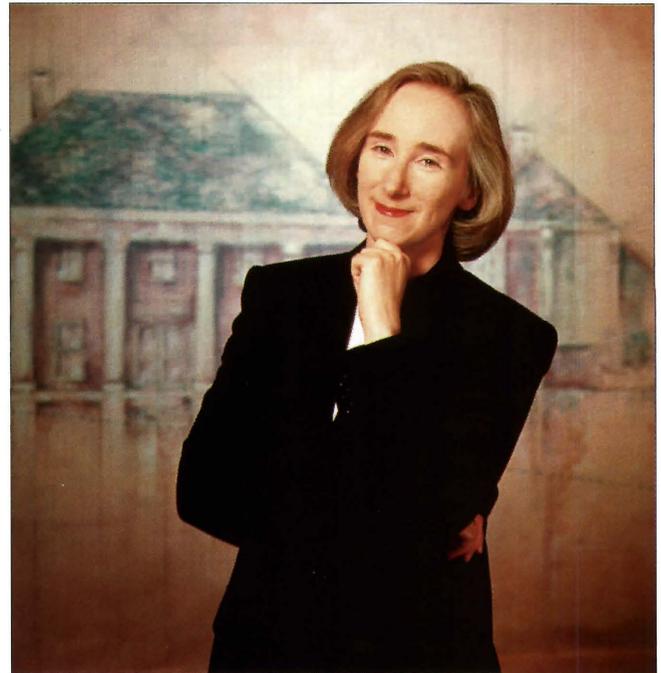


Photo: Katherine Lambert

bayberry," he says. "The strength of our work needs to come out in the detail."

He aims for a "poetic response" to each project. He describes one house as "weathered silhouettes in the landscape" and another as "shelter in the dunes." Although they're primarily designed as vacation homes, their mutability is integral. "Everyone has the dream of retiring here," says Hutker. "So we design the houses for sunny days and rainy days; summer and winter—from one generation to the next. At the beach, there's an edge between too open and what's comfortable and protected. I love that edge."

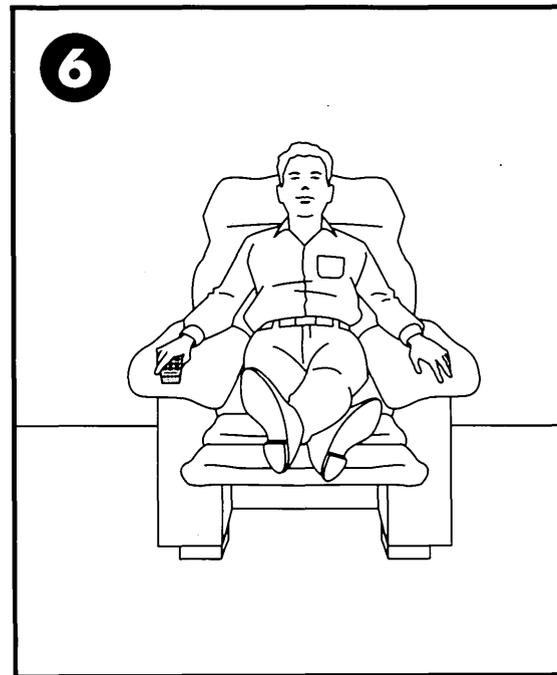
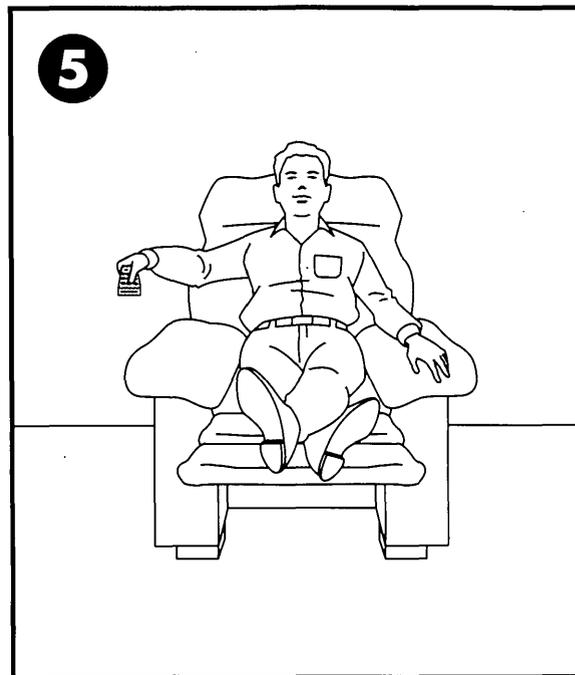
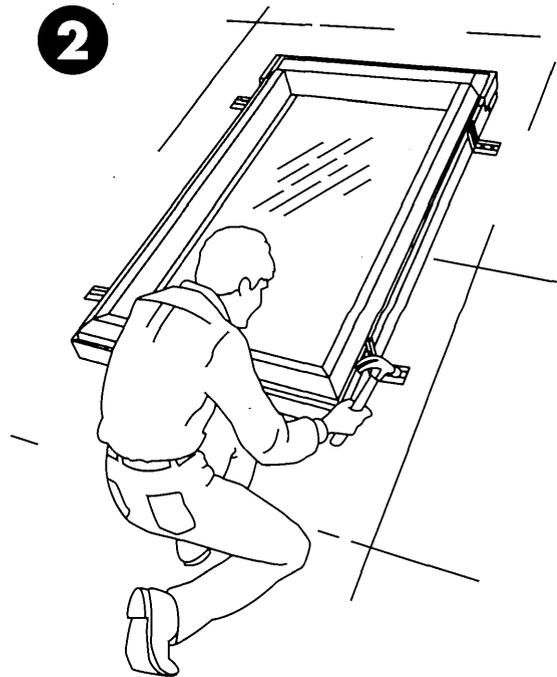
Details, specificity, flexibility, craftsmanship, and basic good taste. These are the characteristics of hous-

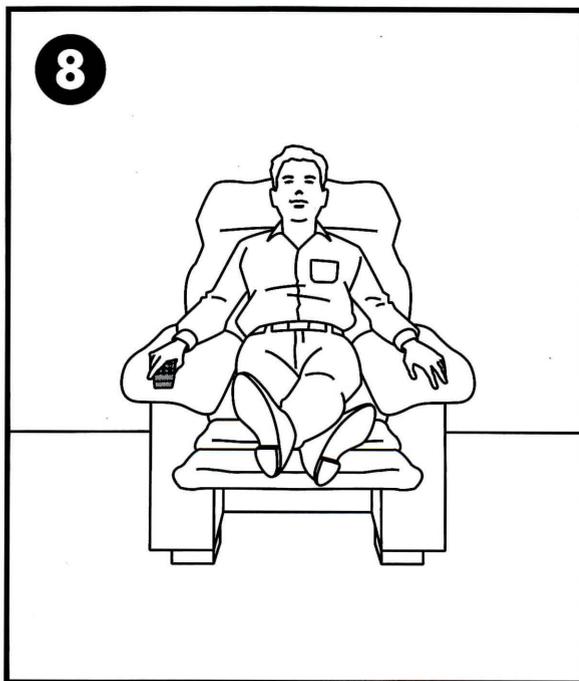
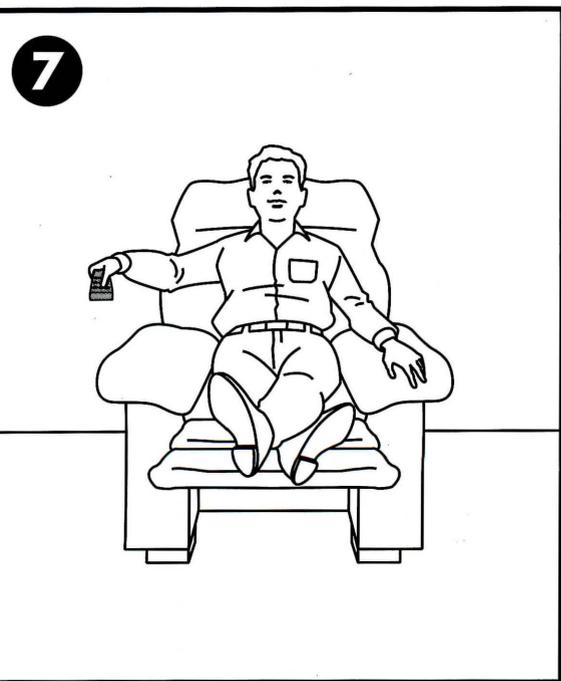
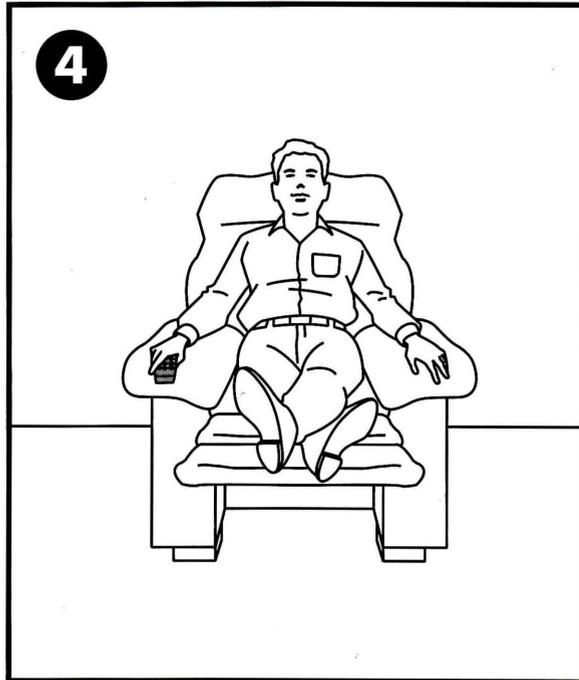
es that delight and endure. They look better with age; they grow more loved over time. They add value to their owners and their communities. Houses are too big, too expensive, too burdensome to dispose of. Everyone lives with your triumphs; everyone lives with your mistakes.

Says Hutker, "We have a clear responsibility for the overall aesthetic in the community. We live and work in this community. We do what's appropriate." **ra**

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

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letters

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a matter of taste

I enjoyed your editorial “The Not So Ugly House” (March, page 13). This subject desperately deserves discussion.

Money to the large house (or any house, for that matter) is like Morris Lapidus’ aesthetic principle: “Too much is never enough.” One has only to become acquainted with the house literature of the past 150 years or so to learn that architects and “tastemakers” have bemoaned the aesthetic

shortcomings of the common American house since at least the beginning of time. In the past, as now, the trouble with houses had little or nothing to do with money but, as you point out, everything to do with ability—the client’s, the architect’s, and the builder’s.

If “architecture” is the most honest of the arts, then the ubiquitous large American house presents a painfully comic image of the culture. The Beverly Hillbillies and their “cement pond” remain a fair comment on the majority of today’s “new money” clients. Jed Clampett didn’t commission or direct the

design of his Beverly Hills mansion, but the American landscape is littered with endless real-life variations of what it surely would look like if he had.

Design of the great American country house today is nearly all but a lost art—an art that peaked in the 1930s and is partially the victim of severe erosion caused by the incoming tidal wave of Modernism and its attendant obsession with originality and novelty. The knowledge and skills of such residential architects as H.T. Lindeberg, Addison Mizner, Dwight James Baum, and William Lawrence Bottomley, to name only a few, simply do not exist in the majority of today’s offices.

Of course there are talented architects out there producing high-quality, award-winning large houses all across America, but they are still the exception and not the rule. Without a doubt, there is a huge hole in the architectural ozone layer that protects houses from the destructive rays of mediocrity and bad taste. The architectural problem is quite simple—not enough old-fashioned talent, experience, skill, propriety, and taste. The best house architects today must be autodidactic because I am not aware of any schools formally teaching the specialized

history and art of the house.

I have a theory that the problem will eventually resolve itself. While scientists experiment with implanting DNA from tomatoes into certain species of fish, the merchant-housing market, through a related process of mediocre design, will continue to produce American houses that are progressively genetically altered to

such an extent that it can only be a matter of time before some “custom” house architect, working for a builder, will unintentionally value-engineer a “colonial” into a cutting edge “contemporary” and become instantly celebrated as the new zeitgeist.

Wayne L. Good, AIA
Good Architecture
Annapolis, Md.

redlines

We misidentified a project architect and two photographers in the May 2001 *residential architect* Design Awards issue.

The project architect for the merit award-winning multi-family project by Fletcher Farr Ayotte (page 71; shown below) was Brett Schulz. The photos of the project of the year (pages 42–45) were taken by Doug Scott of Scott Photography (www.dougscott.com). And the photos of the grand award-winning custom project by Overland Partners (page 57) were taken by Paul Bardagjy.

We regret the errors.



John Dimaio Photography

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home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design

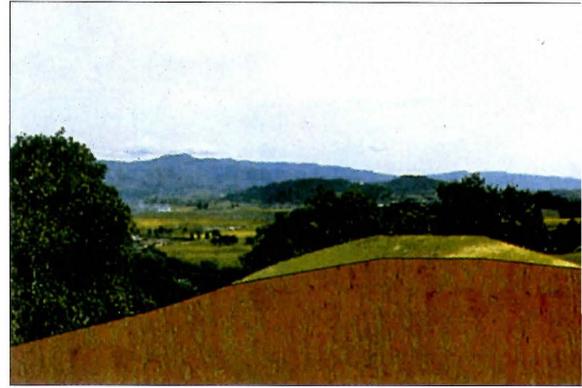
swiss mix

two Swiss architects who began working together with Legos in kindergarten have won this year's \$100,000 Pritzker Architecture Prize. On May 7, Jacques Herzog

(left, top) and Pierre de Meuron (below) accepted the award at Monticello in Charlottesville, Va.

The two friends formed their Basel office in 1978 "[as] an act of rebellion and desperation," said Herzog at Monticello. "The economy was not very rosy." Since then, the firm has combined what Herzog terms "radical minimalism" with sensuous materials to design everything from private houses and apartments to railway utility buildings and museums. Modest early projects eventually led to large commissions like the Tate Modern in London.

"The work of Herzog and de Meuron is at once new and timeless," commented juror Ada Louise Huxtable. The Pritzker jury praised the firm's first U.S. residence: the Kramlich House in Napa Valley, California, a luminous, low-slung structure designed to showcase a video art collection. And

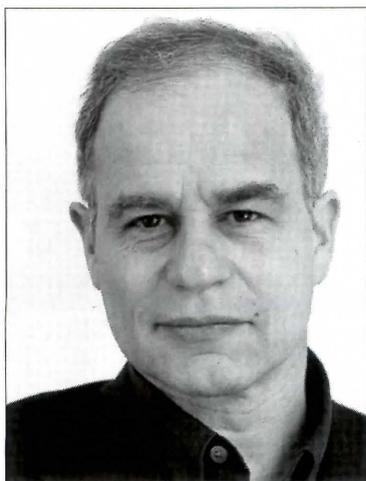
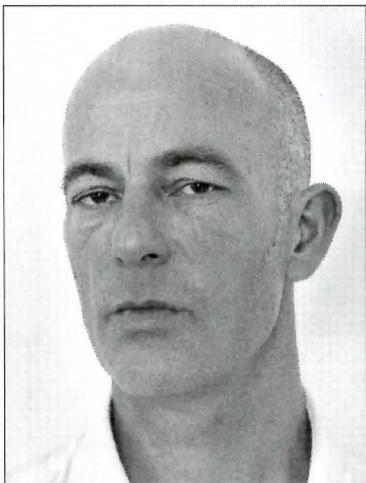


Herzog & de Meuron designed the Kramlich House (above) in Napa Valley, Calif., for a couple who collect video art. The architects describe the cement-walled Rudin House (right) in Leymen, France, as "a simple monolithic building exposed to wind and weather; rain-water runs down it as it would run down a boulder."

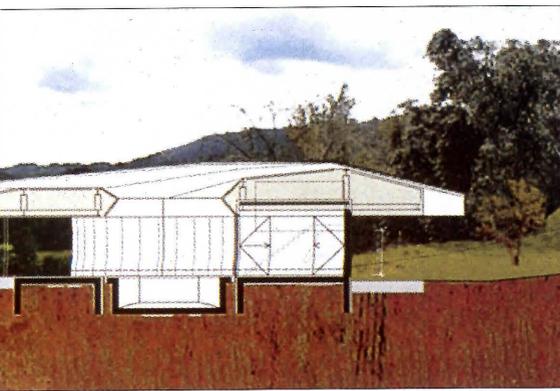
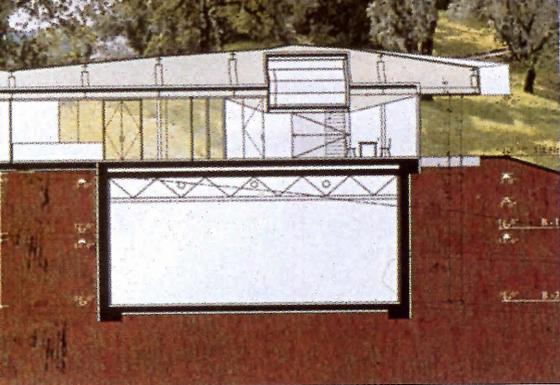
jurors called the raw-concrete Rudin House in Leymen, France, "the quintessential distillation of the word *house*: a child's crayon drawing, irreducible to anything more simple, honest, and direct."

Herzog & de Meuron's residential designs have been hewn from plywood, oak panels, or expertly laid rough stone. "We look for materials that are as breathtakingly beautiful as the cherry blossoms in Japan," said Herzog, "or as condensed and compact as the rock formations of the Alps."

Other U.S. projects include the Dominus Winery in Napa Valley and expansions of the Walker



Photos, above and right: Margherita Spiluttini



Renderings courtesy Herzog & de Meuron



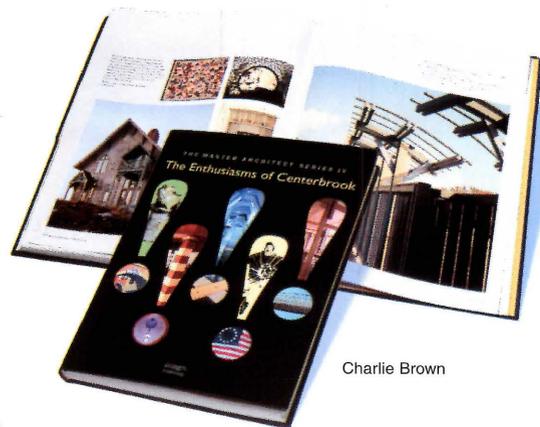
Art Center in Minneapolis and the New de Young Museum in San Francisco.

Established in 1979 by the Hyatt Foundation, the Pritzker has been awarded to such notable architects as Philip Johnson, Luis Barragán, and Rem Koolhaas. Herzog and de Meuron are the first firm partners to be named Pritzker laureates.—*michael leccese*

unbridled enthusiasms

The new book written by the six partners at Centerbrook Architects lies somewhere between monograph and memoir. As its title indicates, *The Enthusiasms of Centerbrook* attempts to document some of the interests and passions of the authors, and to explain how these enthusiasms translate into their architecture.

Structured as a collection of essays and illustrated with photos of work by Centerbrook and others, *Enthusiasms* shows how engaging an architecture book can be when it takes itself slightly—just slightly—less seriously than most. The essays range in length from Bill Grover's 31-word piece "Surprises" to Jeff Riley's 49-page essay "Villages." The best ones are the most personal, like Chad Floyd's charming rumination on the stage sets he encountered as a drama student at Yale, or an examination of the relationship between architecture and sculpture by Mark Simon, the son of a sculptor. All of the book's 26 chapters are beautifully illustrated with photographs, drawings, and plans. All, that is, except for the final two pages, which feature a warts-and-all grouping of candid photos from the well-known Connecticut-based firm's 25-year history. It's a small, excusable slip into self-indulgence in a book that is otherwise wonderfully free of such airs.—*meghan drueding*



Charlie Brown

The Enthusiasms of Centerbrook. William H. Grover, Jefferson B. Riley, Mark Simon, Chad Floyd, and James C. Childress. 256 pp. Illustrated. Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group. 2001. \$60 (hardcover). 800.252.5231.

high style

Architect Greg Crawford is a firm believer in branching out. When a client whose house he'd designed requested a tree house for her two sons, he responded with enthusiasm, producing this whimsical take on the family's contemporary abode. "We were given maximum freedom and were able to design and create without parameters," says Crawford, of Pasadena, Calif.-based CMg Design.

Drawing inspiration from such boyhood obsessions as sailing, flying, and jungle safaris, Crawford opted for a Modernist aesthetic and sturdy materials, including canvas, polycarbonate panels, Douglas fir,



Fred Licht

redwood, and stainless steel cables. Perks include a mosquito net for sleepovers and a pulley system that allows the boys to glide down to the pool for a dip on hot days.—*nigel f. maynard*

calendar

indivisible: stories of american community

center for creative photography,
university of arizona, tucson
july 14–september 30

“Indivisible” documents American life through the oral and photographic histories of twelve diverse communities. Proyecto Azteca, an organization founded by the United Farm Workers Union, has been building quality affordable homes (like the one shown here) in the Rio Grande Valley for the past decade. For exhibition details, visit www.creativephotography.org or call 520.621.7968.



Danny Lyon

in between: art and architecture

schindler house, west hollywood, calif.
july 20–september 2



Gerald Zugmann

For this exhibition, three U.S. artists were invited to create works that respond to R.M. Schindler’s house (left) and its unique site. Hiroshi Sugimoto’s black and white photographs of the house accompany the resulting sound and sculpture installations. Call 323.651.1510 or visit www.makcenter.com for more details.

california pottery: from missions to modernism

san francisco museum of modern art
july 20–october 14



Peter Brenner

This survey of commercially produced pottery includes tiles, planters, and other home accessories made in California during the first half of the 20th century. Shown: California Faience’s three-dimensional cat-head spout tile, produced in the 1920s. For exhibit details, visit www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000.

great houses for great neighborhoods

seaside town meeting hall, seaside, fla.
august 16–18



Steven Brooke

Sponsored by the Seaside Institute on Traditional Neighborhood Housing, this conference will explore the characteristics of a successful New Urbanist neighborhood. Seminar topics include matching elevations and interiors to market segments, difficult floor plans, and building and finish materials. Above: overview of Seaside. Call 850.231.2421 for conference brochure.

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fairmont hotel, new orleans
september 6–8

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2001 custom home show

baltimore convention center, baltimore
september 27–29

Sponsored by *residential architect* and its sister publications CUSTOM HOME and BUILDER magazines, the 2001 Custom Home Show targets custom builders, residential architects, and interior designers. More than 4,000 industry professionals are expected to attend the expo and newly revamped conference, which will feature design seminars on such topics as residential lighting, home theaters, the psychology of color, and universal design. Visit www.customhomeshow.com or call 800.681.6970 to register.



continuing exhibits

Light Screens: The Leaded Glass of Frank Lloyd Wright, through September 2, American Craft Museum, New York, 212.956.3535; **Torolab**, through September 25, Museum Of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 619.234.1001; **Rooms with a View: Landscape and Wallpaper**, through October 14, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, 212.849.8400; **Revelatory Landscapes**, through October 14, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 415.357.4000; **A Century Of Design, Part IV: 1975-2000**, through January 6, 2002, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 212.535.7710.



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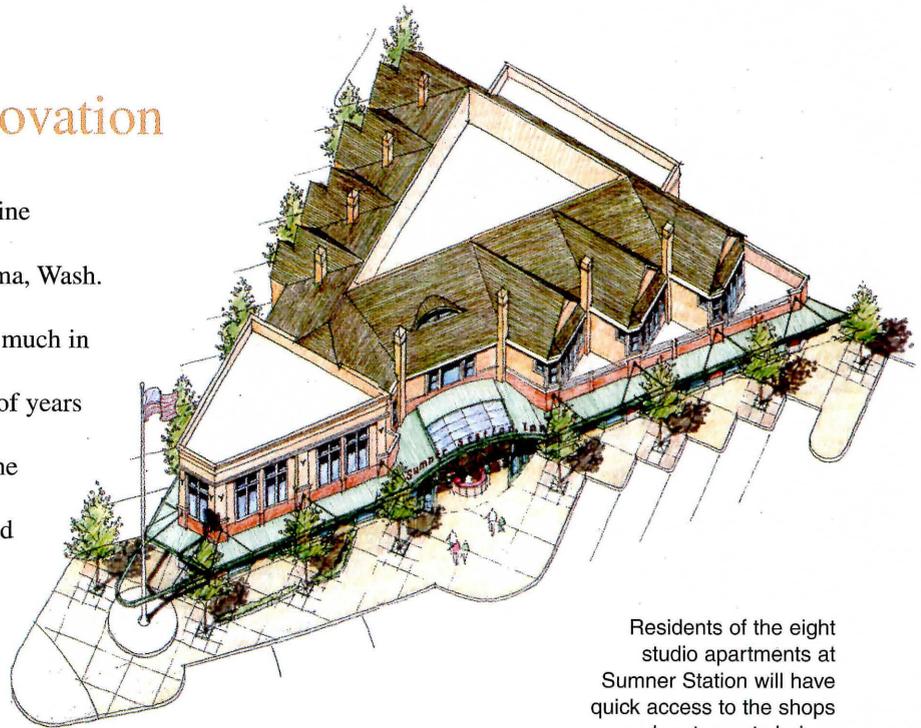
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on the boards / station innovation

Summer, Wash., sits along a new commuter rail line halfway between the cities of Seattle and Tacoma, Wash. The town contains lots of single-family homes, but not much in the way of rental apartments or town homes. A couple of years ago, local businessman David Haines began to notice the lack of affordable housing options for young singles and couples. His own grown son was having trouble finding a place to live in Sumner, and he decided to do something about it.

In 1999 he hired the Seattle firm Hackworth Architecture & Planning to come up with an idea that would encourage young people to live in downtown Sumner, rather than move to one of the big cities nearby. Principal Greg Hackworth, AIA, responded with a plan for Sumner Station, a two-story residential and retail complex right next to the town's new train station. The shops and restaurants on the first floor will serve commuters on their way to or home from work, and the eight studio apartments



Residents of the eight studio apartments at Sumner Station will have quick access to the shops and restaurants below, and to the commuter train station next door.

on the second floor will be rented out. "The community is only two stories, and that sort of underscores the whole point," says Matt Sullivan, the project manager. "It's modestly sized, and modestly priced."

The project is still on the drawing boards at this point; Sullivan says construction is scheduled to begin next spring.—*m.d.*



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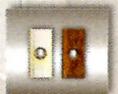
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married on the job

if you think matrimony is difficult, try working with your spouse.

by cheryl weber

a business partnership is like a marriage. So goes the cliched metaphor. What happens, though, when that's not just a metaphor but a reality? There are at least a half-million couples in business together in the U.S. To many, the idea seems perfectly sensible. With the boundary between work and personal life becoming harder to distinguish, why not just merge the two? Having professional goals in common makes home life easier. When one partner has to work all weekend, the other understands. And what's more fun than joining forces with someone you love?

Suffice it to say, there are two sides to this coin. In many ways, experts say, a business partnership in general is as complicated and as vulnerable to the corrosive effects of miscommunication as a marriage. "It's hard enough to operate a business, and hard enough to stay married," cautions Leigh Griffith, an attorney at Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, in Nashville, Tenn. "When you put the two together it's especially rough."

On the flip side, there's the peace of mind of having a business partner who

loves you and whom you can trust. "There's a synergy a lot of couples enjoy," says Kathy Marshack, a psychologist in Vancouver, Wash. "They feel they're more creative than if they were working on their own."

roles and regulations

Steven and Cathi House, San Francisco, have been working in tandem for nearly 20 of the 27 years they've been married. They've even hitched their

family name to create a clever professional identity: House + House Architects. Though the company name was arrived at honestly—Cathi took Steven's name when they were married right after graduating from Virginia Tech—some potential clients presume it's a public relations ploy. Says Steven, "People who see our name in the phone book will call us and say, in all seriousness, 'I assume you do houses.'"

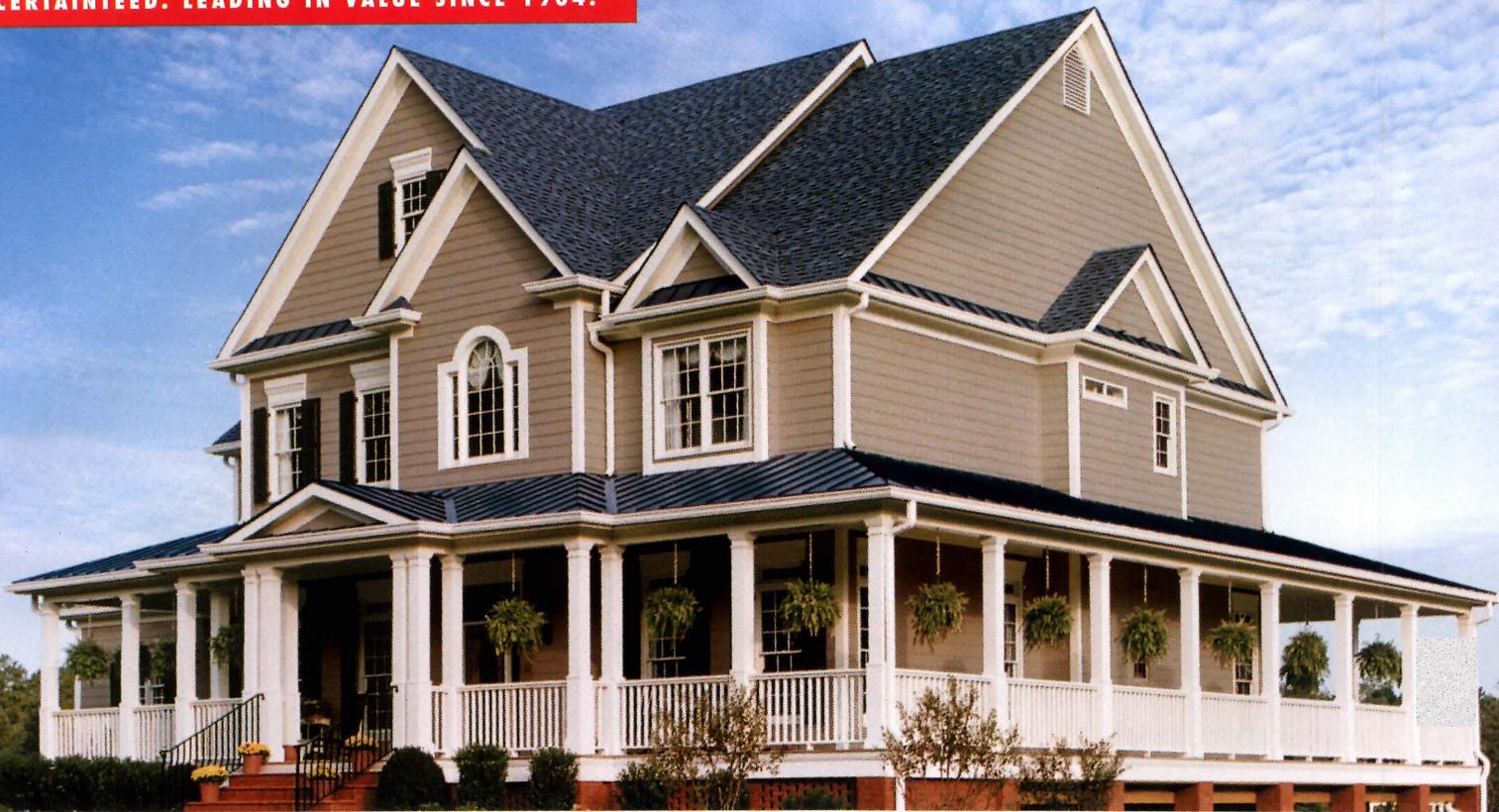
The pair—at the helm of a staff of four—owes part

of their professional bliss to the way they've divided up their turf. But it wasn't always that way. During the first five years of practice, they tried to take turns doing the same tasks. "When we looked at other firms we'd worked in, we saw that one partner was always doing the fine, beautiful things, and the other was doing the nasty jobs," Cathi explains. Yet in their efforts to find fairness, they got in each other's way. "When you

continued on page 28



Joyce Hesselberth



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have to change hats, it's not as easy as changing people in the seat," she says. "We were doubling up on things and not operating as efficiently as we could."

Finally they took a step in their business that's usually reserved for feuding spouses—they called in a counselor. "We had someone chat through with us our priorities personally," Cathi says. "The staff also got involved in helping us redefine our roles."

Steven handles the tasks he enjoys, such as marketing, design critiques, hiring of staff, and walking clients through contracts, schedules, and procedures. He's the big-picture person, making sure the other architects aren't getting off track on budget or design direction. Cathi, who loves to draw, is responsible for most of the design work. Bookkeeping and accounting tasks get split, with Steven in charge of money coming in, Cathi of money going out.

"It corresponds with how we live our personal lives," Cathi says. "I generally buy things, so paying the bills is part of what I do, while Steven does the invoicing."

Not all entrepreneur couples collaborate this harmoniously. In the case of husbands and wives, even those with professional credentials succumb to a major pitfall when they combine business cards. They unconsciously default to traditional gender roles that can diminish their identity, according to Mar-

shack, author of *Entrepreneurial Couples: Making It Work at Work and at Home* (Davis-Black Publishing, 1998; her Web site is www.executivecouples.com). In an academic study of 30 couples, she found that co-entrepreneur relationships are less egalitarian than marriages in which the spouses have separate careers.

"Dual-career couples view themselves individually as professional leaders," Marshack says. "When they come home they see themselves as social partners, both responsible for the house and the children. But couples in business together start slipping into traditional gender roles to get tasks done. I was amazed to find that's true of professional couples such as physicians and attorneys, not just mom-and-pop ventures. The husband is seen by the community as well as the couple as the leader; the wife is the support person."

Margaret McCurry, FAIA, and Stanley Tigerman, FAIA, of Tigerman McCurry Architects, Chicago, neatly avoided that trap by sharing staff but choosing their own clients. "I set out to establish my own reputation," says Margaret McCurry, who has published a book of her work. "And we deviate into different paths. Stanley was always interested in reiterating American society at whatever moment it might be in.

planning for the unexpected

When spouses share business ownership, a stroke of bad fortune can wreak havoc on the family finances. If your firm is structured as a partnership or sole proprietorship, your personal assets are up for grabs in a lawsuit. Attorney Leigh Griffith and Arthur Andersen's Steve Thorne generally recommend setting up a limited liability company. It offers some personal liability protection, is tax-efficient, and has more flexibility than an S Corp.

Planning for divorce also seems pointless when you're happily married. Like prenuptial contracts, buy/sell agreements between couples are emotionally laden, making them difficult to draft. But there are some precautions you can take. Segregate corporate and family assets—for example, don't use the firm to buy your vacation condo. And identify how the firm's worth will be determined if a partnership hits the skids. "The valuation of a business is the most hotly contested issue in a divorce settlement, creating great acrimony," Thorne says. To get unbiased results, some people specify that two or three independent appraisers be hired, with the couple agreeing to rely on their average estimate. And be sure to include an extended payout period to shelter your cash flow from the shock of a one-shot settlement.—c.w.

I'm more interested in American vernacular architecture. We can each play around with the other's thought processes when we need to, and we certainly critique each other's work. Still, it's easier on your psyche to have one person controlling a design."

It's not that husbands want to run roughshod over their wives' interests, Marshack believes. It's a communication problem. "Wives just tend to take on certain tasks because of traditional role models we've had. And a lot of resentments build up." She recommends sitting down and assigning responsibilities according

to interest and ability. Tasks nobody wants to do should get hired out or split up, instead of defaulting to one partner or the other.

business school
That scenario is part of a larger problem that catches spouses unaware. If conventional wisdom dictates that a business partnership be treated like a marriage, observing the rules of mutual respect, the opposite is also true. Entrepreneur couples should play by the rules of business. "You're never totally successful in compartmentalizing your business and personal life," says tax attorney

continued on page 30



Shown: Wisconsin Weather-Edge LedgeStone. In background: Golden Blend European Castle Stone

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ney Griffith. "But try to approach your business as if you were third parties, not as an emotional outlet for the family. Don't do something for your spouse you wouldn't do for a good business partner. And don't ask your spouse to do something you wouldn't ask of a partner unrelated to you."

Griffith advises spouses to talk through issues they'd raise with any other professional partner, including how to structure the business for tax and liability purposes, how capital will be raised, and how

a board of directors, or deciding to do nothing at all if both parties can't agree.

Early on, another potentially sensitive topic to resolve is each person's share of ownership. "A lot of disputes arise, particularly in a general partnership, around who has what percentage of the business," Griffith says. "People get real upset later when they think they own something and the other person disagrees, whether it's in the context of a split-up or a new person buying into the interest."

"treating each other differently than you'd treat an employee or consultant can be confused with disrespect."

—stephen varenhorst, aia

decisions will be made. For example, close physical proximity forces spouses into ongoing, low-level negotiations. But one day they may reach an impasse on a major decision. When there are only two owners, who will decide the outcome? "There's a tendency to say, 'I love you and everything is wonderful,'" Griffith says. "But the easiest time to resolve any disagreement is when it's hypothetical." He suggests drafting a course of action, whether it's naming a trusted associate to break the deadlock, deferring to

the outsiders

Are spouse teams a turnover for potential employees? Steve Thorne, head of family business consulting for Arthur Andersen, says no, though the owners may have trouble finding good managers because equity in the firm is hard to get. "Spouse teams generally aren't good delegators," Thorne says. "Their organizational charts are flat because everyone reports to the bosses."

Taal Safdie and Ricardo Rabines, Safdie Rabines Architects, San Diego, admit that dealing with two

partners gets complicated for their 13 employees. Both of them participate in the design of every project, so "staff have to pass design issues between the two of us," Rabines says. Adds Safdie: "People can feel they're getting between us. If we're disagreeing on a design, who will they listen to?" On the other hand, the pair has tried to create an informal office culture where it's fine for people to disagree.

The Houses also expect staff to speak their minds. In fact, verbal skirmishes are encouraged. "Steven and I believe in the struggle of what we do, which means tearing it up and throwing it away if it's not there yet," Cathi says. "We have very different viewpoints on things and often disagree in front of our staff. But we want them to participate as well, not disappear under a veil of politeness."

Clients may have the better deal. Julie Eizenberg, who practices with her husband, Hank Koning, FAIA, in Santa Monica, says some clients feel reassured that one of them is a technical expert and the other will be looking after the vision. After working together for 20 years, their roles have merged a little. Typically they both work on the design concept. Eizenberg follows through with design development, and Koning concerns himself with how the project gets built. Nevertheless, "The best clients we've got

are interested in the way we think about things," Eizenberg says, "not that we're husband and wife."

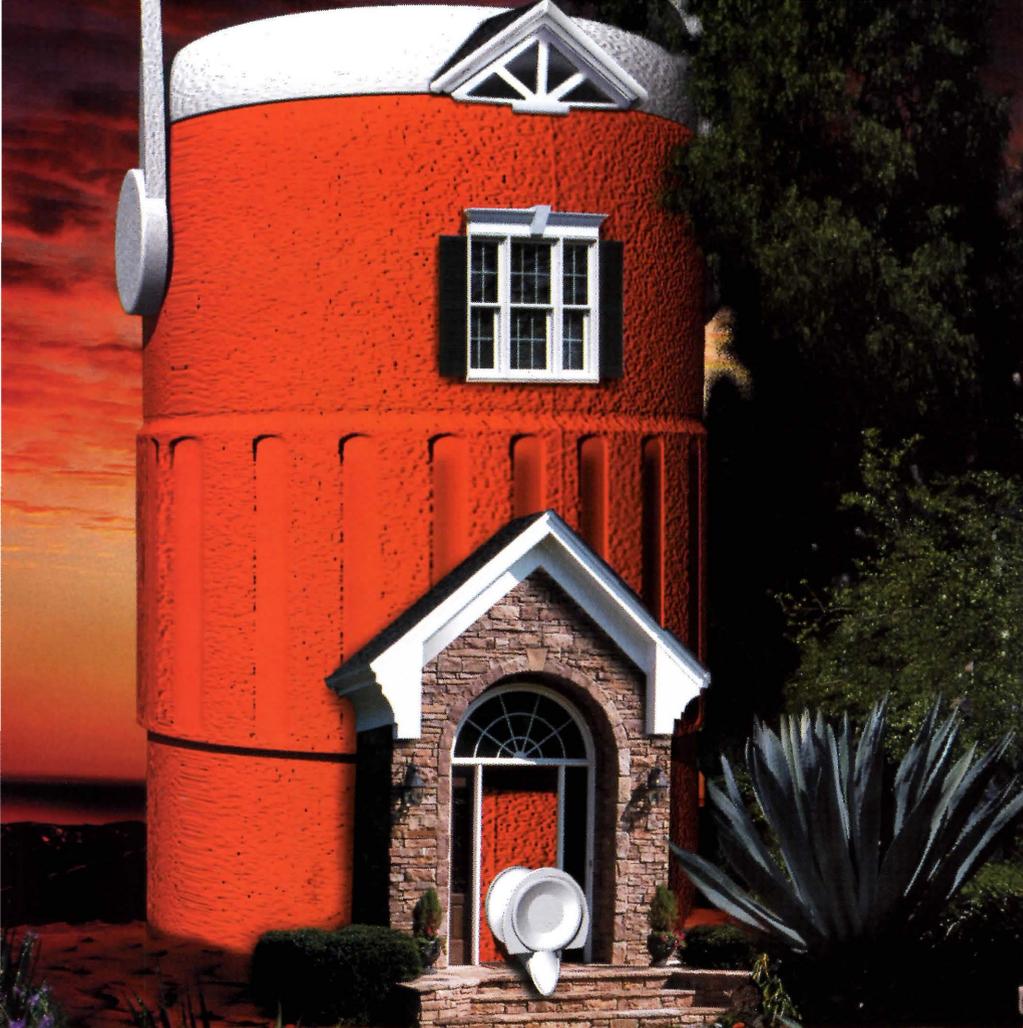
Tom Tolleson, who runs an architecture firm in Evergreen, Colo., with his wife, Cheryl Tolleson, believes their partnership appeals to a certain group of people. "I think there's a really big attraction in the residential high-end market, because most of the time these homes are being built by a couple," he says. "It's two couples meeting each other and there's a certain level of comfort."

The Houses attract the same kind of market in San Francisco. Ninety percent of their clients are a husband and wife. "Clients will gravitate to one or the other or like us both, so we find we have twice as good a chance of getting a job," Steven says. "It's also a plus because some people feel that a man's and a woman's point of view might be different, and they're getting both. It's an unsaid thing that comes out in subtle ways."

Working in the Philadelphia suburbs, Ellen and Stephen Varenhorst, Varenhorst Architects, also believe their structure and respective strengths benefit clients. "What's important for them is that our roles are defined, and I'm not saying one thing and Ellen another," says Stephen, AIA. He designs, and Ellen oversees construction. "It's a nice distinction for them," Ellen

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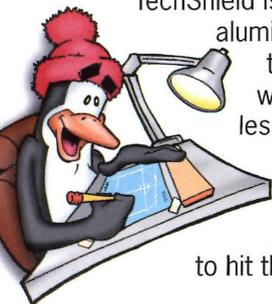


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says. "When we explain our roles, they almost give a sigh of relief."

balancing act

Many couples believe that because they love each other, have raised children together, or went to grad school together, they should be able to get along running a business. Not so, says Marshack. Couples who work together will have a lot more fights, because there's more to fight about. "A business is about making money. And couples argue about money anyway," she says. "One gets concerned about

whether the other handled a client right, or whether the partner should have negotiated an extra \$10,000 into the bid. It can make you quite cranky with your spouse."

Marshack stresses the importance of realizing your partner will be more sensitive to your criticisms than someone else will. "You have to be polite, take more time to communicate what you mean and clarify what the other person means," she says. "It will take more time than if you were working on your own or with a nonrelated partner."

People whose lives are intertwined 24/7 are also prone to communicating in ways that aren't productive in a business setting. One danger the Varenhorsts have encountered is assuming that each knows what the other is thinking. "Treating each other differently than you'd treat an employee or consultant can be confused with disrespect," Stephen says. In their 14 years of working together, they've also kicked the habit of using each other to vent frustrations about staff. If Stephen had difficulty with an employee, he'd

continued on page 34

"don't do something for your spouse you wouldn't do for a good business partner. and don't ask your spouse to do something you wouldn't ask of a partner unrelated to you."

—leigh griffith, attorney



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complain to Ellen instead of going to the source. Then he'd feel better but Ellen would be angry. "It can pile up over time," he says. "It became so corrosive that we put it aside."

They also put aside time for themselves. Making the 15-minute commute from home to office in two cars may seem like a small thing. But to the Varenhorsts it represents a much-needed sense of separation. "At first we tried to be conscious of ecology," Stephen says. "But we decided it was more important to save our relationship."

Friday night is date night for Steven and Cathi House

—and business talk is taboo. But they spend Saturdays apart. That's not so easy for Eizenberg and Koning, who have two children ages 11 and 15. How do they separate their business and personal lives?

"We do and we don't," Eizenberg says blithely. "We're big believers that your work is better if you have a life outside the office. But there's a lot of crossover. We meet friends through our work. Life is pretty fluid at the moment—is this a house or an office?"

The answer doesn't matter if the discussion is part

of a creative process, Marshack says. Talk business anywhere you want. But tedious topics are best resolved in the office, she advises, not in the bedroom or when you're on vacation. "If you have children, they need a break from your preoccupation with work—they're not in on it. Lots of kids who've grown up with entrepreneur parents complain they don't want to raise their children that way. They didn't get enough of Mom and Dad."

One thing couples seem to appreciate about running a business together has little to do with the nine-to-

five routine. Rather, it's sharing a common philosophy about architecture's role in the community. "Your values permeating everything you do together is the biggest element of success," Safdie says.

"It's an interesting setup," Rabines agrees. "The two of us like to deal with social aspects of architecture. It takes away the egomaniac thing architects have of just trying to make design interesting. Our philosophy shapes our work and defines it." *ra*

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

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INNOVATIVE APPLIANCES SINCE 1934

mark hutker is living a dream—
with eyes wide open.

island *paradigm*

by s. claire conroy

how many people dream of living at the beach? What if you could really do it *and* practice at the top of your profession? Welcome to Mark Hutker's life. Since 1985, the Hoosier native has made Martha's Vineyard, Mass., his home and base of operations for his residential architecture practice.

The 100-square-mile island is a seven-mile puddle jump south of Cape Cod, and a vacation destination popular with a host of famous names. President Clinton slept there; Carly Simon, James Taylor, Katharine Graham have houses there; Jackie Onassis was an illustrious resident and architecture patron. Travel anywhere across the country and you'll see someone wearing a T-shirt with a big black dog on it, an icon from the island's favorite hangout and logo purveyor, The Black Dog Café.

Martha's Vineyard has a smart, hip, wealthy, and mostly

liberal cache that's taken on a life of its own. And after this last economic boom, which made even Democrats rich, lefty good-life seekers are building and renovating homes on the island at a frenetic pace. Twenty-five to 30 a year have hired Hutker to do their design work. He is in the right place at the right time, with the perfect combination of talent, business smarts, and people skills to take full advantage. Here he is, living at the beach with his wife and two young children and doing the best work of his career.

architect and poet

Once upon a time—let's call it the '80s—Hutker might have identified as a Postmodernist. And a glimpse at his early houses with their whimsical geometries and colors confirms the notion. It's no surprise; Robert Stern and Michael Graves were the superstars in residential architecture back then. But evolution, changes in clients' tastes, and the need to



Bob Gothard

Mark Hutker's design for the Menemsha Pond house attracted more conceptual projects to the firm.



With the Menemsha Pond house, Hutker explored the sculptural beauty of structure. The tepee-like shape of the combination living/dining/kitchen area relates to the site's Native American roots.

island *paradigm*



Bob Gothard

After 13 years as an associate in the firm, Phil Regan (left) is now Hutker's partner. Regan loves the traditional work as much as Hutker loves the modern projects. Hutker based the Menemsha Pond house (above, right) on Native American traditions of the round house and long house.

earn a living honed Hutker's style into something, shall we say, more contextual.

Fortunately for Hutker, Martha's Vineyard has lots of context. It's been nearly 400 years since Anglo-Saxons settled the island, and 5,000 years since Native Americans called it home. Imaginative architects have abundant antecedents to draw from. In some cases, man-made context doesn't matter at all—many sites are so heavily wooded you can barely find your own front door, much less see a neighbor's house. There, inspiration comes from a vast palette of natural elements—oak and pine trees, bayberry, lichen, sand, seashells and stones, ocean and pond waters.

Still, amid all this bounty,



Peter Vanderwarker

beauty, and booming business, Hutker has a worry. It's a luxurious worry that only successful architects can indulge—once their family is fed and their staff is paid—but it's one that tugs at the soul of all creative people. He's concerned that his focus on giving clients the houses they want has caused his firm to lose track of its poetic sensibility. "I struggle with this personally," he explains. "I fear we've become a little too chameleonlike."

If he didn't believe in satisfying his clients first and his muse second, Hutker might push to design only modern houses.

But he insists he's in a service industry, and if his clients have their hearts set on an old-fashioned Shingle-style house, that's what they'll get. "Architecture school fostered a love-hate relationship with clients," he says. It's an attitude he rejects. "They told us we have to educate the client. But that presumes you know better than they do what they want and need."

But here's the tug: "We say we give clients what they want," he says, "but we're artists and we bring vision to the table." So, what's an artist in a service industry to do?

Hutker has a few ideas. He's poised the firm to mine the good times and he's preparing a hedge against a future slowdown. First off, he's imposed a

structure and logic on what had been an ad hoc mix of traditional and modern projects. Sometimes, to name it is to tame it. So, he describes the firm's portfolio as a combination of "conceptual" work, "mannered" work, "cottages," and renovations. The mannered projects relate to *cultural and stylistic* traditions, although not always those within the island's built vocabulary. The cottages, he explains, tend to link "more directly to existing buildings." The firm designs about six new custom homes a year, ranging from 5,000 to 8,000 square feet, and oftentimes much larger.

"We struggle with what it means to have a portfolio of modern and mannered work," he says. "All young architects feel this to some extent." But Hutker is making peace with it, and that's easier because he has a 13-year associate he's just elevated to partner, one who loves to do the traditional work.

Phil Regan grew up on Martha's Vineyard, son of an Oak Bluffs postmaster and the librarian for the *Vineyard Gazette*. He is, says Hutker, an "island guy," who understands both the year-round community of 15,000 and the summer swell to 100,000 residents. Like his mother, he loves the history and diversity of the island—Edgartown's elegant Greek Revival houses, the

"we say we give clients what they want, but we're artists"



The Dog Fish Bar residence is a simple, beautiful response to the site and program. "Cottages are so sweet, so charming," says Hutker. "Their smaller scale allows an intimacy, a direct relationship to the land."

Brian Vanden Brink

and we bring vision to the table." —mark hutker

island *paradigm*

The back side of Eel Pond house cocks an eyebrow to its water view. The clients requested a formal, elegant house; Hutker and Regan responded with a “Chanel suit.”



Brian Vanden Brink



Steve Rosenthal

Hutker's early work, as demonstrated in the Spring Point residence, had a Postmodern flair. His current work reflects a more personal response to the needs and opportunities of each project.

quirky Oak Bluffs' Victorians, Vineyard Haven's rambling Shingle-style houses, and the low, crumbling stone walls that trace ancient property lines.

Although Hutker is still the firm's chief rainmaker and client schmoozer, Regan is gaining ground. "The question we always get is, 'Mark, how involved are you going to be in the project?'" says Hutker. "We follow the 70/30 rule. I'm involved about 70 percent in the beginning and the project architect is involved about 30 percent. As the project goes along, it shifts the other way. That's when they've gained the client's trust. But now, there are clients Phil brings into the office I've never met."

Even among projects Hutker brings in, Regan does the micro-managing if the clients want something traditional. Hutker holds tightest to the conceptual work he favors. One of his pet projects was the Menemsha Pond house, which he completed about four years ago. Inspired by the building traditions of Native

Americans who originally settled the property, and empowered by a \$365-a-foot budget, he let his muse fly free. The result is a beautiful, sculptural, and very livable vacation home. Its shingle cladding is one of the few nods to convention.

The house has enabled Hutker to attract other "poetic opportunities," as he calls them. And when they don't just drop into his lap, he tries to create them. For each project, his office now develops three schemes: "The first is what the owners think they want, the second is closer to the first or third, and the third is completely out of the box—a poetic approach to site and program."

It's certainly extra work for the firm, but it serves the client better and makes possible a higher level of artistic achievement. Sometimes clients need a little nudge out of their comfort zone to get the house their heart wants, not just their head.

Not everyone takes Hutker's deal; some take part of it. But

"the trouble with e-communication is the e-instant expectations."



Brian Vanden Brink



Brian Vanden Brink

none would take any risks without proof he could do the house they were looking for when they walked in the door. That's why order of presentation is everything. "We show them the house they think they want first," he says. "You have to show them you listened, you heard them. Then we show them the more conceptual version. If you do it the other way around, you scare the hell out of them. There's a confidence-building that comes of showing you listened."

Although his office is plenty techy, Hutker relies on basswood models to demystify his high-concept houses. "For the same time and cost as a virtual model, I'm going to choose basswood. You can't feel and touch an e-presentation," he says. "There's nothing more exciting and compelling than the first view of the model."

forward thinking

As the firm's work becomes more conceptual, execution of the interiors grows more com-

plicated and crucial to the success of the project. That's in part why Hutker recently added an interior design division to his practice. Headed up by Susan Bielski, he hopes it will also hedge against a downturn in the new construction business. He guesses his high-end clients might choose to redecorate rather than renovate if money gets tighter.

He's installed the interior design business on the ground level of the strip mall he's made his headquarters for years. Like everything in Martha's Vineyard, it's had a recent face-lift. The island has a brand-new airport, too, replacing the lobster-shack terminal and chicken-coop baggage claim area it had before. What hasn't changed is Five Corners, the intersection just steps from the ferry stop in Vineyard Haven, the island's only year-round town. The mixing-bowl intersection, dreaded by all who live or visit there, is hard by Hutker's office. In

the summertime, it can easily turn a five-minute errand into a 45-minute ordeal.

Other headaches beset business on the island. The source of most of them is the time and money associated with having to ship everything in. It makes everything more expensive—building, living, staffing. Moderately priced housing is almost nonexistent.

After 15 or so years on the island, Hutker is finally doing well enough to add a few rooms to his house and park some nice cars in his new garage. He's also opened an office in West Falmouth, Mass., an attempt to make inroads into the mainland market and to tap design and building talent he can't entice across the bay. "Trying to grow a healthy, aggressive architectural firm in a laid-back community isn't easy," he says. "We're as intense here about our work and getting things done as any urban firm."

To help get things done on Martha's Vineyard, he shares an

Instead of "trophy houses," Hutker seeks to design "heirloom houses": "They should have an emotional effect, and a quality of materials, construction, and sensible design that makes them timeless." The Slough Cove compound (above and left) is Hutker's most fully realized heirloom project to date.

we've lost the time to think. i don't always have my best idea first. —mark hutker



Brian Vanden Brink

The Sengekontacket Pond residence (above and opposite), which predates Slough Cove, articulates a similar agrarian vernacular. Hutker calls it “weathered silhouettes in the landscape.” A pegged timber frame and insulated stressed-skin panels balance the desire to expose structure and the need to protect it from the elements.

office with one of the island’s top custom-home builders, Andrew Flake. If clients so desire, they can have an almost-design/build arrangement with Hutker and Flake, or simply invite Flake to bid on drawings.

The one-stop shopping appeals to quite a few vacation-home buyers, who tend to commute among several houses, several coasts, and sometimes several countries. Keeping in touch with one office streamlines the process.

the e-clients

Luckily, working with long-distance clients is much easier in these days of e-mail and digital cameras. In fact, Hutker asks each client for a digital-camera allowance so he can equip the contractor with it. “The contractor uses it to shoot problems and e-mail them to us from the site.

We can now resolve problems that used to take a two-hour site visit.” The contractor also documents the progress of the house and any questions for the client.

Of course, not every architect has such tech-savvy clients. Hutker’s movers and shakers, however, are virtually all virtual. They’re also very demanding. “The trouble with e-communication is the e-instant expectations,” he says. “We’ve lost the time to think, to incubate. I don’t always have my best idea first.”

But his high-end clients are not inclined to grant Hutker the luxury of time. They’re extremely schedule-driven. All is focused on having the home ready by the summer season, usually beginning in early July. A house of the size and luxury Hutker builds rents for approximately \$50,000 a month on the island, so if the

house he’s designing is a month late, that’s what his clients think they’ve lost.

“With the stakes so high here, people wig out when the least little thing is wrong,” he says. “They’re under so much pressure to relax, it causes them tremendous angst. Their expectations are very, very high. The house had better be perfect.”

So maybe running an architecture practice in an island paradise is no day at the beach. Nonetheless, Hutker’s roots are firm in Martha’s Vineyard’s sandy soil. It’s a great place to raise his children; he enjoys the entrepreneurial feel of doing business there; and the rarefied clients it attracts offer tremendous opportunity every time they commission a house. Each time, he takes deep breath: Will they hire the architect or the poet? *ra*

“trying to grow a healthy, aggressive firm in a laid-back community



Brian Vanden Brink

...not easy, we're as intense here about our work as any urban firm." —mark hutt

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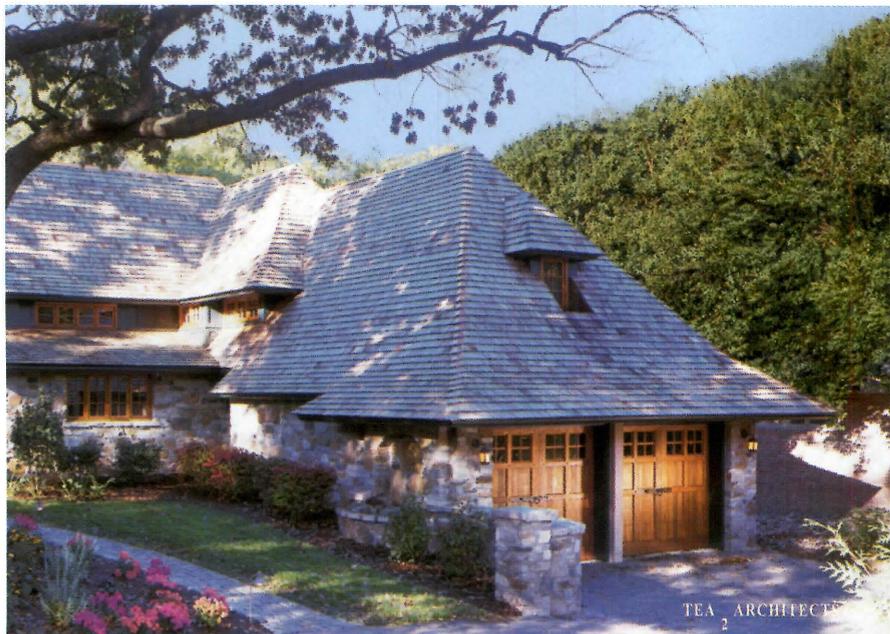
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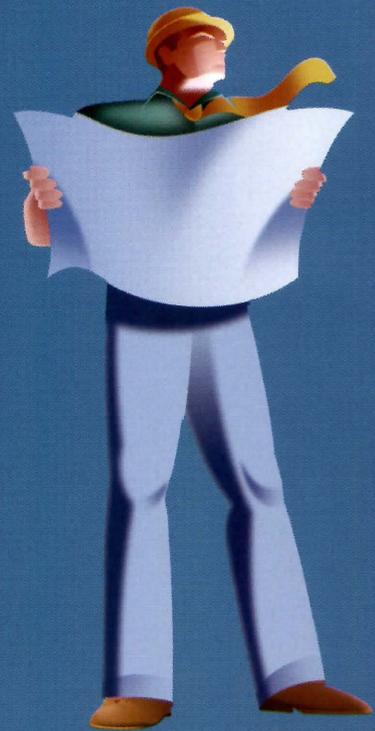
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a

Seattle architect Stuart Silk's vacation house sits on a 4-foot-high platform supported by concrete pillars. The uplift keeps the house from flooding during heavy rains or unusually high tides.

Photos: Laurie Black Photography

separate peace

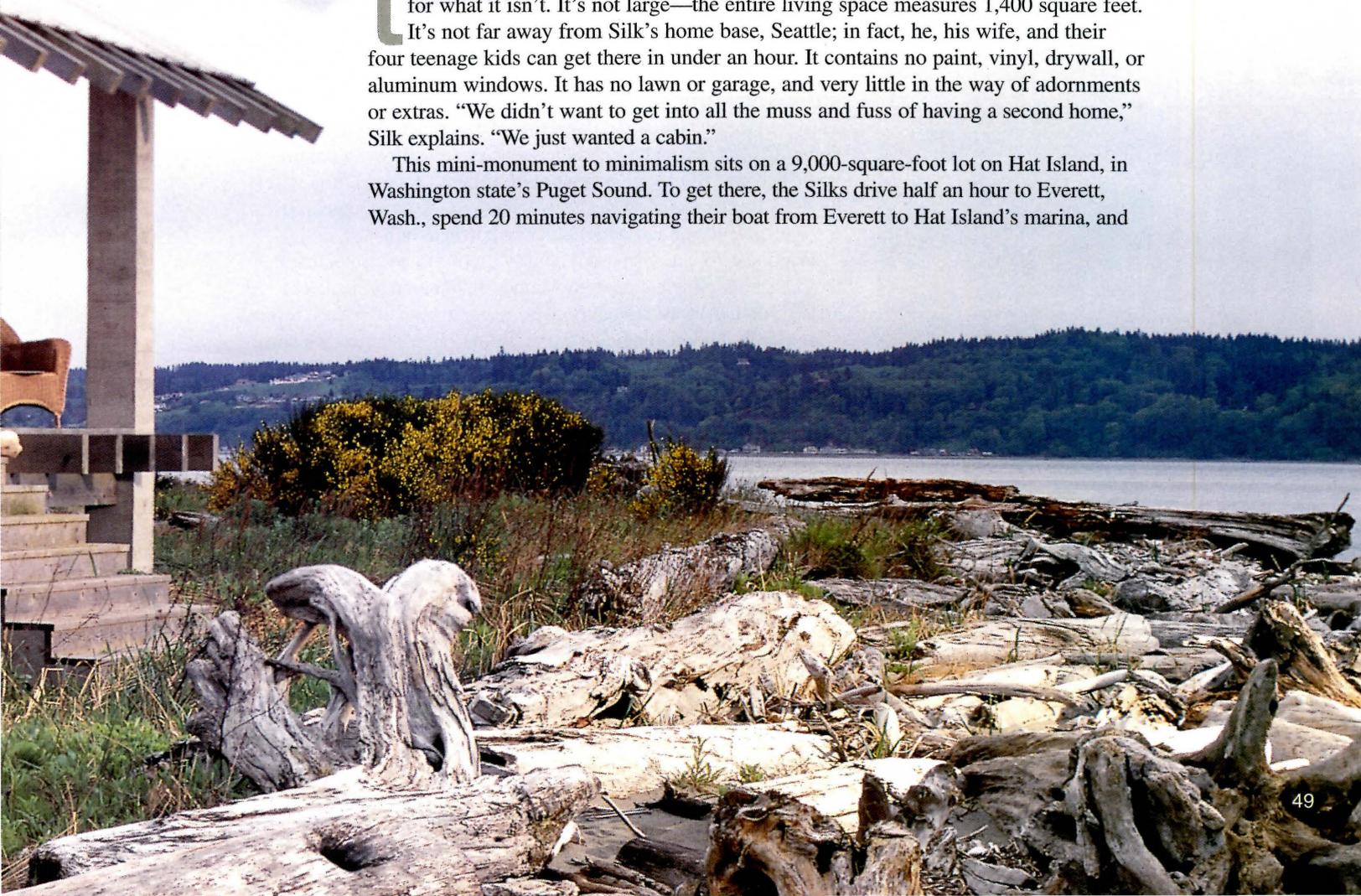
three vacation homes stand the test of free time.

by meghan drueding and nigel f. maynard

just enough

the vacation house Stuart Silk, AIA, designed for himself may be most noteworthy for what it isn't. It's not large—the entire living space measures 1,400 square feet. It's not far away from Silk's home base, Seattle; in fact, he, his wife, and their four teenage kids can get there in under an hour. It contains no paint, vinyl, drywall, or aluminum windows. It has no lawn or garage, and very little in the way of adornments or extras. "We didn't want to get into all the muss and fuss of having a second home," Silk explains. "We just wanted a cabin."

This mini-monument to minimalism sits on a 9,000-square-foot lot on Hat Island, in Washington state's Puget Sound. To get there, the Silks drive half an hour to Everett, Wash., spend 20 minutes navigating their boat from Everett to Hat Island's marina, and



a separate peace



then use one of the marina's loaner cars to drive down a dirt road to their property. "We were looking for an escape from the hectic city life," Silk says. They came to the right place. At its most populated time—usually Fourth of July weekend—the mile-and-a-half-long island swells to about 1,000 people, but its winter population drops to a fraction of that.

high life

The house's location on a rocky, windswept sand spit makes for great views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains. But it also means flooding is possible during an extremely high tide. So, in accordance with local laws, Silk created a 4-foot-high concrete platform for the house. Columns of the same material support the platform, allowing a high tide to flow underneath the building.

Their elevated position gives the Silks a measure of privacy from the two or three other families who reside nearby. A pair of identical, 6-by-20-foot porches—one at the front of the house and the other at the back, looking out on the water—further delineate the divide between public and private. "The front porch is where you sit in the morning and have coffee and talk to the neighbors," Silk says. "The back porch is a great place to read a book or watch seals, birds, and the occasional orca." Each one is just big enough for two chairs and a table, which is exactly how the couple planned them. The standing-seam metal roof that covers the house extends over both porches, giving them a protected, enclosed feeling.

safe and sound

Silk tried to establish a similar sense of sanctuary throughout the home. It's the reason he lined the great-room walls with continuous bookshelves. "Books are a symbol of refuge for me and my wife," he says. Built-in window seats contribute to the cozy atmosphere, but the spare decor and detailing keep cuteness at bay.

Windows, too, are meant to convey comfort and containment; they're small, punched openings rather than the large, paneless affairs popular in waterfront houses. A grand stone fireplace topped with a driftwood mantelpiece is the primary heat source. It's supplemented by wall heaters, but according to Silk the fireplace usually produces enough heat to warm the entire home.

Simplicity and symmetry distinguish the floor plan, which consists of a kitchen that opens up into a great room; two bedrooms, each with its own bath; and a sleeping loft. Thanks to a shed dormer's 20-by-2-foot clerestory window, sunlight reflects off the waters of the sound and into the home even on cloudy days. Offshore breezes ventilate the main room and sleeping spaces throughout the year.

Though Silk's house doesn't use recycled materials or a graywater system, it's green in its own way. He selected materials as close to their natural states as possible, free of the toxins present in so many synthetic materials, and he set the house lightly on the land. Best of all, he designed exactly what he needed and nothing more.—*m.d.*



The Silks' great room (top and right) serves as living room, dining room, and library. A galley-style kitchen and a massive stone fireplace act as bookends to the loft-like space.

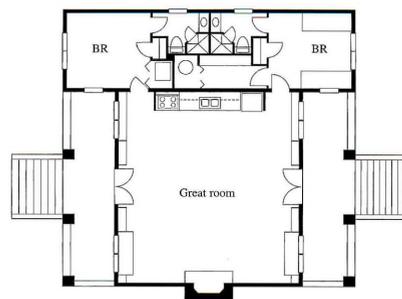


architect:
Stuart Silk Architects, Seattle

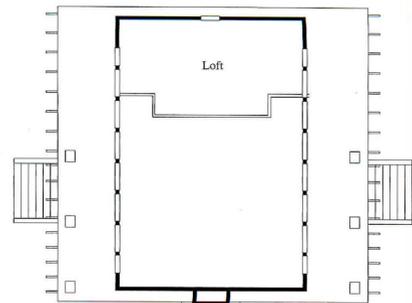
builder:
Del Hirzel Construction, Hat Island, Wash.

size:
1,400 square feet

cost:
\$150 per square foot



first floor



second floor

a separate place

cabin cure

architect Christine Albertsson's clients for this northern Minnesota vacation home enjoy spending time with their grown children and extended family. But they like their privacy, too. The obvious solution—a vast, multiwinged house—wouldn't have suited their site, a wooded, seven-acre piece of lakefront property. Nor, according to Albertsson, would it have suited their personalities. "They'd had a builder do a design for a new cabin that was really overscaled, with 10-foot ceilings and that sort of thing," she says. "They hated it!"

So Albertsson, AIA, who at the time worked for the Minneapolis firm Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, came up with a plan to give her clients a comfortably scaled living space while still providing room for guests. The 1,000-square-foot main cabin she designed contains a central kitchen and great room, flanked by a master suite and a sun porch. A timbered carport connects the main cabin with a 300-square-foot bunkhouse, also designed by Albertsson, that sleeps four. And an existing boathouse a few hundred feet away holds another four sleeping spaces.



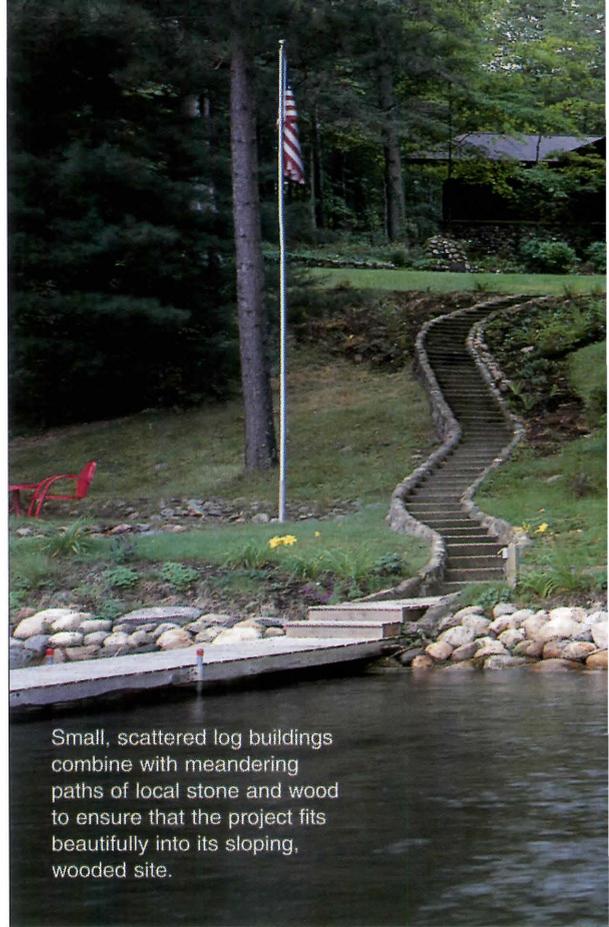
For this cabin on a Minnesota lake, Christine Albertsson, AIA, used oversized stained logs and red window frames to convey a sense of coziness and refuge.

Photos: Peter Bastianelli-Kerze

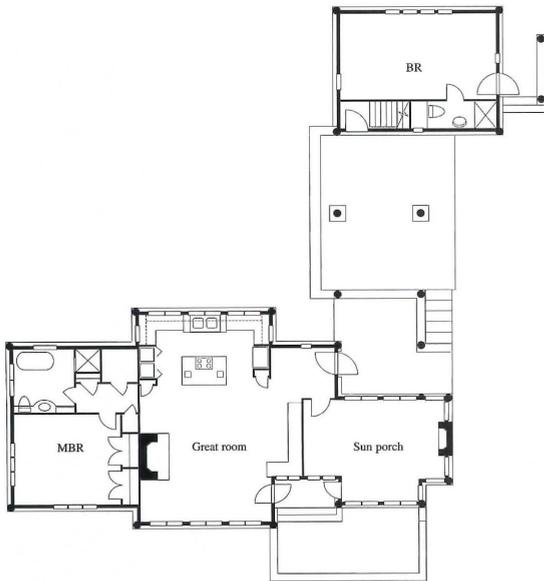
a separate peace



Centrally located between the master bedroom and the guest bunkhouse, the great room provides the owners and their visitors with an ideal gathering spot.



Small, scattered log buildings combine with meandering paths of local stone and wood to ensure that the project fits beautifully into its sloping, wooded site.



log look

The boathouse's log and fieldstone siding inspired the log cabin theme that Albertsson incorporated into the two new buildings. "The clients didn't give me a lot of guidelines," she says. "They just told me they wanted something charming." Building an actual log cabin wouldn't have been practical, considering the need for efficient insulation during Minnesota's severe winters, so she designed a stick-built frame with log cladding. Since the owners liked the look of tarred, weatherproofed Adirondack lodges, they had the logs stained a few shades darker than their natural hue. Smooth, fist-sized fieldstones rim the foundations of the main house and bunkhouse, and they reappear as landscaping elements throughout the site.

Albertsson manipulated the materials and scale of the project to make it look even smaller than it is. She selected oversized, 14-inch-diameter logs and brought the walls down to 7 feet 6 inches instead of 8 feet. Deep roof overhangs and zippy red-painted wood windows impart a fairy-tale flavor to the exterior. "The oversized logs emphasize the 'lowness' of the buildings," she says. "By using them and by making the walls shorter, I was trying to set the house apart and make it look a little different. I also wanted it to have an intimate scale." On a larger, more complicated house, the same components would have overwhelmed. Her strategy works, largely because of the plan's elemental simplicity.



made by hand

The main cabin's interior derives its simple beauty from a craftsmanlike approach to detail. Birch timbers salvaged from the bottom of Lake Superior line the walls, ceilings, and floor. A Minneapolis cabinetmaker carved intricate leaf and vine patterns into the large maple kitchen island, as a reference to the home's wooded setting. The owner, an interior designer, had found a set of travertine tiles carved into rosettes, and she asked Albertsson to incorporate them into the sun-porch floor. The architect used the pricey tiles sparingly to keep costs down, interspersing them randomly with larger, plain tiles of tumbled travertine.

Generous river-stone-covered fireplaces warm both the great room and the window-lined sun porch. Tempering the heavy wood and stone elements are white-painted kitchen cabinets and natural light from a windowed cupola tucked into the great-room ceiling.

Anyone who's ever designed a log home knows it's not easy to pull off. A few small slipups, and the whole thing tumbles into clunky or contrived. That's why you'd never guess this is Albertsson's first log structure—it's graceful and functional, without the least hint of kitsch. "It's very different from designing a regular house," says the architect, who now has her own firm in Minneapolis. "I definitely had a hard time with some of the details. But it was so much fun."—*m.d.*



architect:

Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Minneapolis

landscape architect:

Close Landscape Architecture, St. Paul, Minn.

builder:

Nor-son Inc., Brainerd, Minn.

size:

1,300 square feet (main cabin and bunkhouse)

cost:

Withheld

Outdoor spaces, like the walled front terrace above, help the 1,300-square-foot house live large.

a separate peace



New York City-based Bromley Caldari Architects opted for modest materials like galvanized metal and cedar cladding to lend the beach house an unaffected elegance.

Photos: Christian Richins



vision correction

a vacation home is a guilty pleasure; one by the beach is gravy. As such, it's obligated to indulge in its surroundings. This vacation home, located in the resort community of Fire Island Pines, N.Y., started life as a small, dark box that failed to appreciate its bay-front site. The owners called on Bromley Caldari Architects in New York City to replace the cramped shack with a better-appointed, more water-friendly house.

Bromley Caldari approached the project from a strong position: Principal Scott Bromley, AIA, has had a home on Fire Island for almost 20 years, and he and the client, Ed Lewis, have been friends for most of that time. What's more, the firm has worked on about 30 homes on the long and narrow strip just south of Long Island across the Great South Bay.

a separate peace



Fixed-glass panels maximize light and views in the kitchen/living area (top), while large timber columns help the screened porch (above) resist high wind loads.

heroic stature

The clients, who use the house every weekend from Easter to Halloween, wanted a light-filled, spacious retreat for entertaining—one that had a guest bedroom and a central space for enjoying the great view. A painting studio was another must-have.

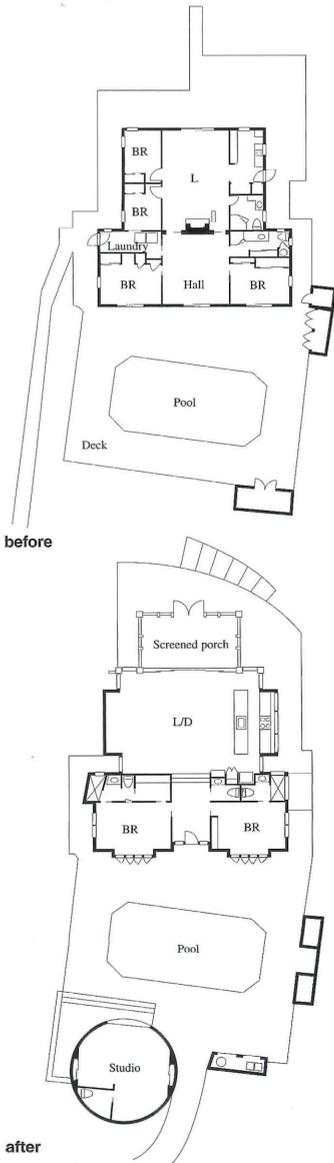
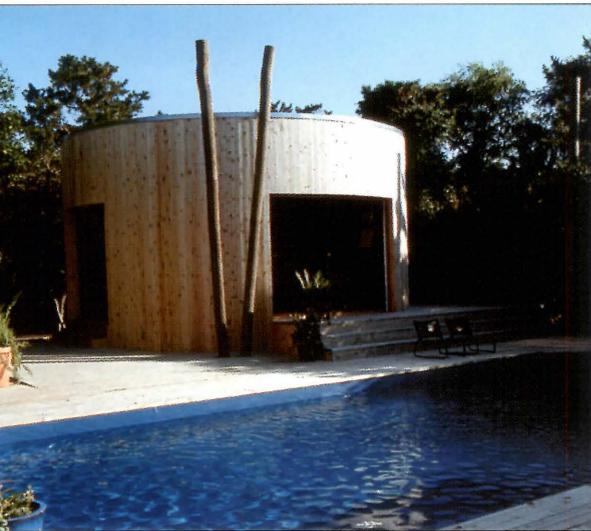
Though it was technically a remodeling project, the result is essentially a brand-new 1,600-square-foot house, says principal Jerry Caldari, AIA. For tax reasons, the architects kept the same footprint, but they razed most of the existing structure, reinforced the foundation, and added new floor joists, wood walls, and roof. They also reduced the number of bedrooms from four to two, reconfiguring and enlarging the remaining ones, and added new windows and two new bathrooms.

Because the island is nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and the bay, the narrow lot has no real front and back, says Caldari. But the focal point of the exterior is a large timber-framed, double-height screened porch that rises from the dunes to face the bay. “When you are outside looking at the porch, it is a pretty heroic structure,” he says. “Those are fairly large columns.” The porch, which has not only screened walls but a screened roof, provides sanctuary from the voracious mosquitoes and other unwanted guests.



Twelve-by-twelve-foot columns and wood glu-lam beams permit soaring 14-foot ceilings and uninterrupted vistas of the Great South Bay.

a separate peace



A 400-square-foot circular painter's studio overlooks the pool (left). The house's bedrooms are lined with cedar.

open-ended

Opening up the floor plan was a major programmatic requirement, so a procession through the porch leads to a voluminous living/dining room. The room has large glass openings to maximize natural light and views. "This is the biggest effect of the house," says Caldari. "When you are in that room looking through the porch to the bay, it is an amazing feeling." The original design called for custom glass windows, but the architects instead used a combination of fixed glass panels and standard-sized awnings. "We were able to save a lot of money by just shifting things a bit here and there," he explains.

Bromley Caldari performed a similar budgetary balancing act in the kitchen, specing cabinets faced in colored plywood, black walnut countertops, and cedar-covered walls. Corrugated metal roofing clads walls elsewhere in the project, and red brick floors line the major areas (except the bedrooms and baths). "You don't usually see brick flooring at the beach," Caldari says. "But it's something the clients really wanted to have."

The architects' interventions result in a much more beach-oriented abode. Cozy and charming, it allows its owners to enjoy the sun, the sea, and the surf. And, when the spirit moves them, they can pursue their muses while gazing at still waters: Their new 400-square-foot, circular-shaped studio has a roll-up door opening onto the pool.

"They wanted something wonderful," says Caldari. "That's what we gave them."—*n.f.m.*

architect:

Bromley Caldari
Architects, New York

builder:

Bill Katen, William Katen
Custom Building, Fire
Island Pines, N.Y.

size:

main house 1,600
square feet; studio
400 square feet

cost:

\$175 per square foot

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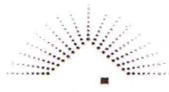
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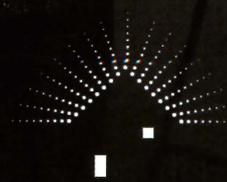
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continued on page 66



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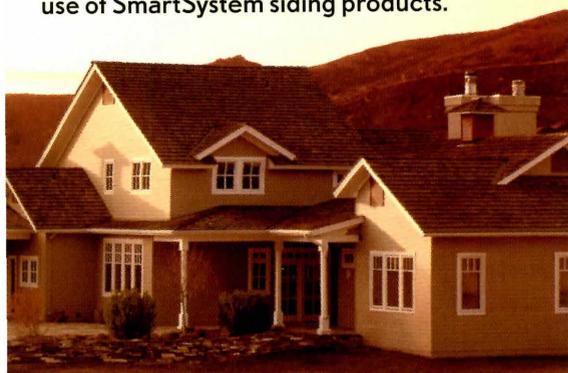
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keeping current

The Lanai outdoor electric grill can be installed in any covered outdoor area.

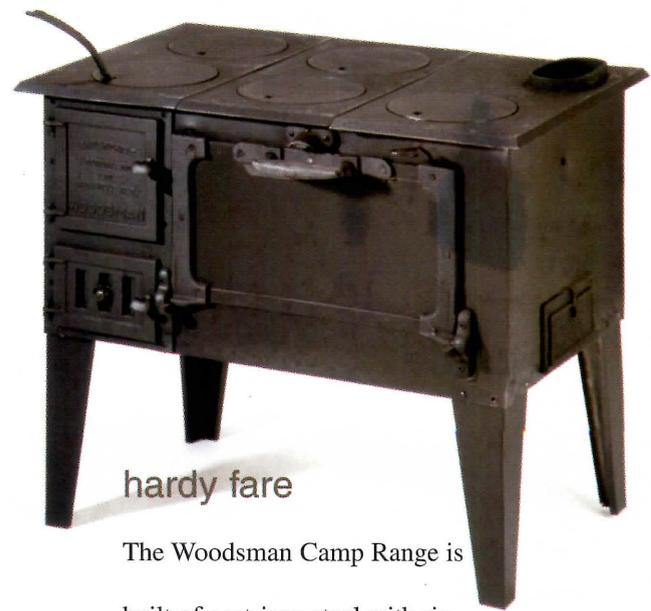
Its nonstick double grill measures 30 inches across and features infinite control settings and downdraft

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At 1,100 pounds, the Piccolo Mobile wood-burning oven isn't easily portable, but it can be finished in any style and mounted on a permanent base. The 31½-inch cooking surface accommodates three 10-inch pizzas, two 13x9-inch roasting pans, or up to six 10-inch loaves of bread. Mugnaini, 888.887.7206; www.mugnaini.com.



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The Woodsman Camp Range is built of cast-iron steel with riveted and welded joints to withstand any kind of climate. The 21-inch-wide oven and five 9-inch covers handle a variety of foods. An optional 8-gallon copper water reservoir can be installed to keep a supply of warm water available. Enterprise Fawcett, 506.536.1160; www.enterprise-fawcett.com.

—shelley d. hutchins

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faux stone may be the perfect impostor for your next project.

by nigel f. maynard

ms. Money Penny just hired you to design her Georgian manse near the Atlantic coast, and her laundry list of requirements calls for fancy stone moldings and sills, stone facing for the fireplace, and structural columns with capitals and cants for the interior and exterior. To top things off, she wants a durable stone that will not bloat the budget or slow the frenetic construction pace.

You could spec natural cut limestone, a good choice in this case, but don't expect Ms. Money Penny to pat you on the back or send you a bottle of 1990 Château Latour when the project is six months late and well over her budget.

perfect alternative

A clever architect might consider architectural pre-cast stone, a manufactured product that will bring your project within budget and bring you into your clients' good graces.

Though it has been around for a while, cast stone is hot. "We didn't use much of it in the past, but lately we've been getting more requests from clients who want a durable and cost-effective product," says Stephen Herlong, principal



Courtesy Cultured Stone

This fireplace by Barg Meeks Barnes of Tucson, Ariz., is covered with Cultured Stone's Weather Edge LedgeStone, a lightweight manufactured-stone veneer that costs half as much as the real thing.

of Stephen Herlong and Associates in Isle of Palms, S.C. Jerry Johnson, of Caperton-Johnson in Dallas, says the product has been very popular his market, and now his northern clients are asking for it, too.

Made from Portland cement, sand, aggregates, and coloring pigments, cast stone can be either wet-poured or dry-tamped into molds of various shapes, sizes, and designs to simulate the look of natural limestone. It's long been an architectural feature in commercial projects, but is increasingly being spec'd in residential projects for, among other things, exterior trim, newel posts, balustrades, and veneer.

Natural limestone is a fantastic product, but "in some cases, it may not have the technological or physical properties an architect is looking for," says Mark Ferguson, AIA, principal of New York City-based Ferguson Shamamian & Rattner Architects. "Cast stone is the perfect alternative." It can be reinforced with steel, and its weathering qualities are comparable, if not better, than those of natural stone because the manufacturing process is controlled.

material advantages

The material has other advantages, too. Because of the sorting and culling



Dickson Dunlap

Christopher Rose Architects often uses versatile cast limestone for fireplaces. "It looks great because you can control the color," Rose says.

involved, natural stone has a long lead time, Ferguson says. "You have to find enough of it and make sure it all looks similar." Cast stone has no long wait, making
continued on page 72



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Circle no. 323

ing it perfect for high-paced construction schedules.

For many, the reliability and uniformity of the manufactured product are major selling points, says Ken



Mick Hales

Cast-stone veneer, columns, and balustrades in a coral stone finish embellish this Palm Beach, Fla., residence by Ferguson Shamamian & Rattner.

Yingling, sales manager for Sierra Architectural Industries in Cincinnati. “Stone from a quarry has natural discoloration, but we can do more consistent colors,” he explains.

got rocks

The price of cast stone varies widely depending on the style and level of detail, but it generally costs about half as much as natural products. “If you are using natural stone, the shapes have to be cut and carved by hand, which is very expensive and time-consuming,” Ferguson says. “Cast stone, on the other hand, can be done over and over using the same molds.”

The manufacturing process also means that cast stone offers more design possibilities. If you can dream it, a manufacturer can probably design a mold to produce it. “The product is poured in liquid form,” says Johnson, “so it can be almost anything.”

Ferguson says you can spec it with an acid wash for an aged look, or choose a faux finish with natural veining or a stained appearance. One manufacturer, he says, sprinkles moistened baking soda into the molds before pouring the cement mixture. The baking soda “clumps” up, leaving behind a coral stone surface when the molds are cured and washed. There are as many techniques and stylistic effects as there are manufacturers.

Herlong uses cast stone in his contemporary work, but says the product’s versatility

means that it can be used anywhere. For example, architect Christopher Rose, of Johns Island, S.C.–based Christopher Rose Architects, says it’s perfect for the Tuscan and Mediterranean styles so prevalent now.

If a traditional stone facing is in order, manufacturers like Napa, Calif.–based Cultured Stone and Artistic Stone Products in Woodstock, Ga., offer a lightweight concrete stone veneer. Bob Heath, vice president of marketing for Cultured Stone, a division of Owens Corning, says the product can be used indoors or outdoors for fireplaces, walls, and landscaping applications. Heath says Cultured Stone comes in more than 350 different products in 20 stone textures, and costs about \$10 to \$15 per square foot installed. Artistic Stone comes in more than 30 textures and in various colors.

weighty issues

Despite its benefits, cast stone has some issues that are important to understand and address. For example, some manufacturers claim cast stone is less expensive than natural stone only if the spec involves profiles and designs; flat products, they say, are comparable in price.

But Charles Rager, president of the Cast Stone Institute in Winder, Ga., and plant superintendent of Sun Precast in McClure, Pa., disagrees. “The natural product may be cheaper in those instances, but a backup system might be needed for installation,” he says, which ends up

costing more. “On our jobs, there is always a savings if the customer goes to cast over natural.” He suggests architects contact their supplier for exact information.

Flat or fancy, cast stone can still cost a pretty penny, in some cases up to hundreds of dollars per square foot. And because it’s heavy, shipping accounts for a large part of the bill. To offset costs, use a source close to the project whenever possible. “The weight also means that an adequate structural steel system is needed for installation,” says architect Jerry Johnson, “so you need people who are familiar with the product and can do adequate installation.”

Another thing to keep in mind is the look of the finished product, says Rager. Where are joints going to be? Where do you break one piece to make the next one? “Those are some of the questions we ask early in a project, so the architect needs to have all that information,” he says.

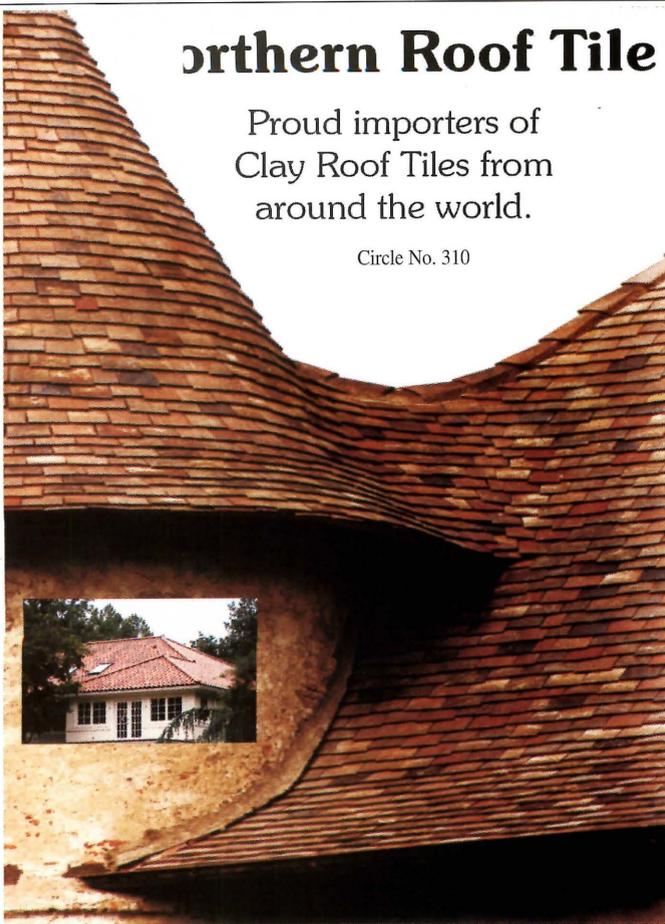
plan ahead

More than anything else, it’s essential to work closely and early with your manufacturer to help determine if cast stone is right for your project. Even if your clients can afford genuine limestone, faux may suit the job better, Herlong notes. Cast stone can give your clients the look and feel of the real thing but with the durability and design versatility that only the faux version can provide. **ra**

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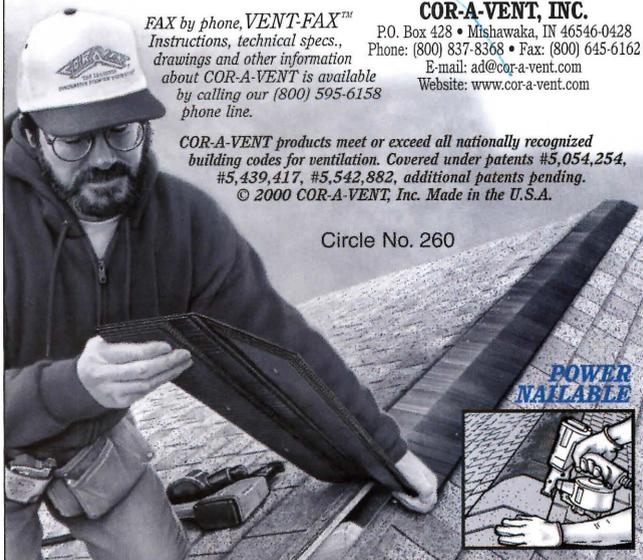
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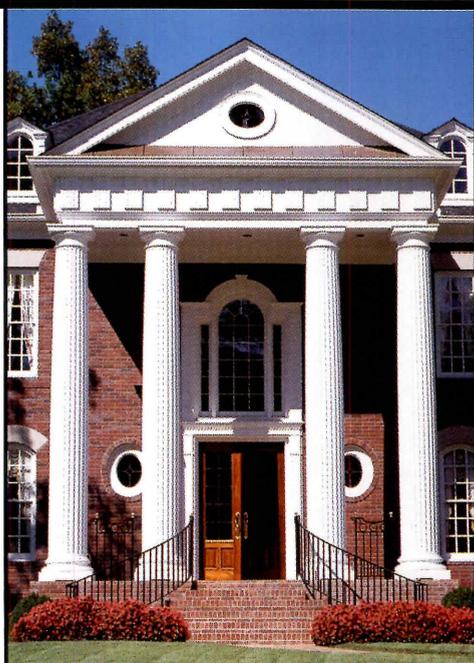
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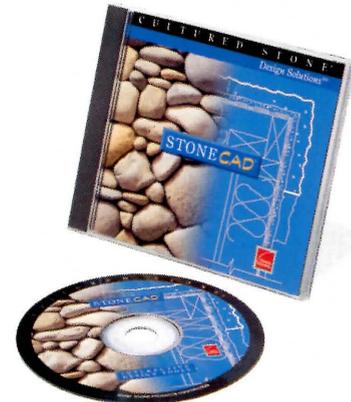
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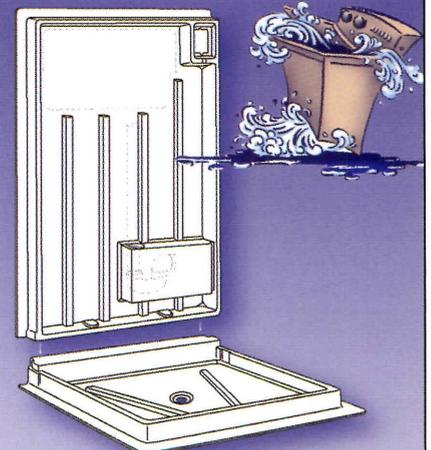
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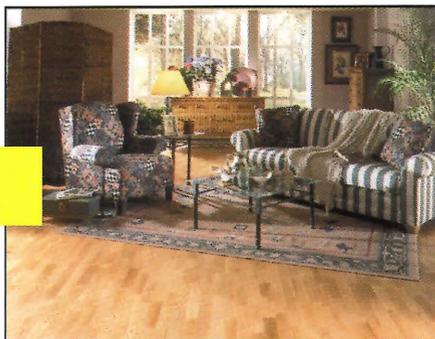
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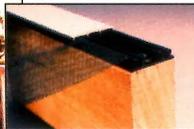
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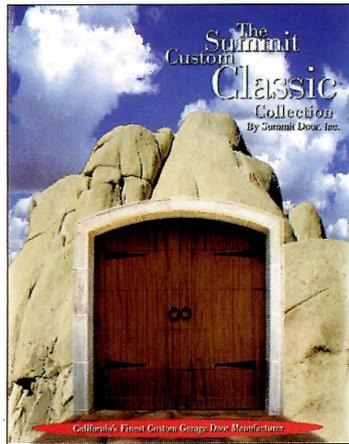
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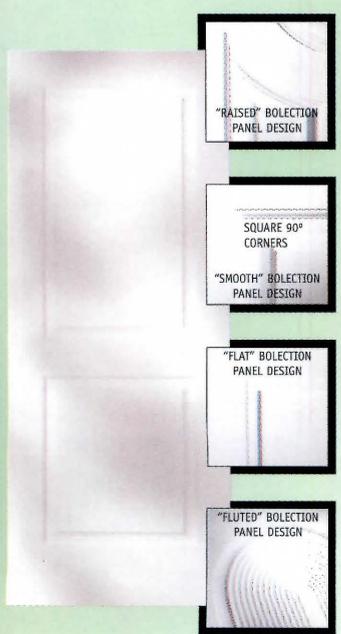
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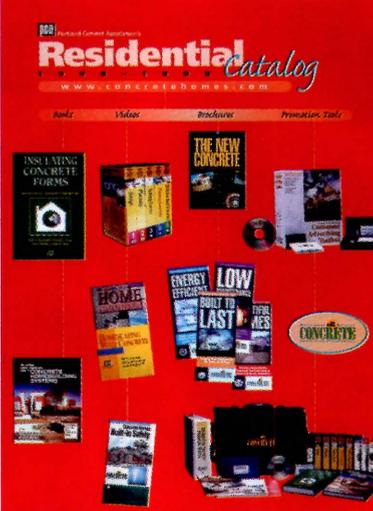


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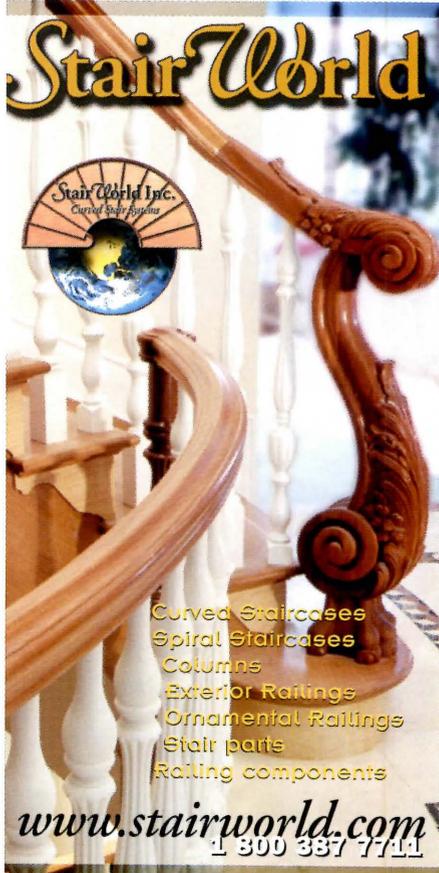
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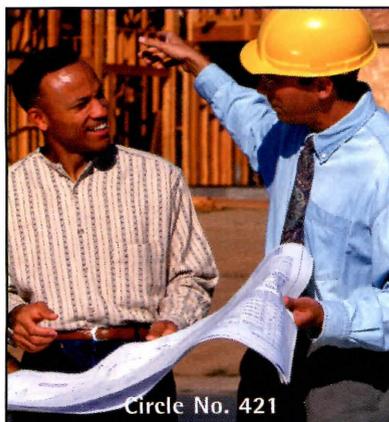


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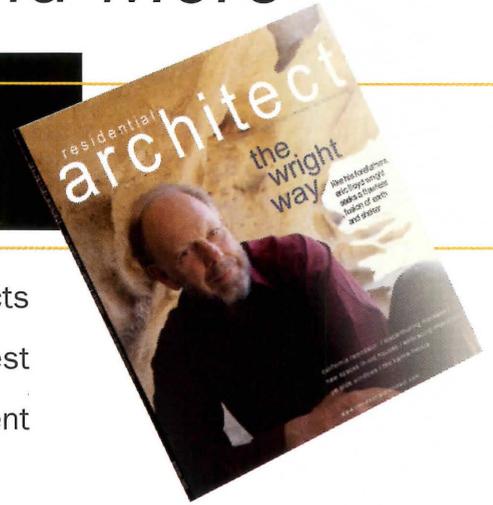
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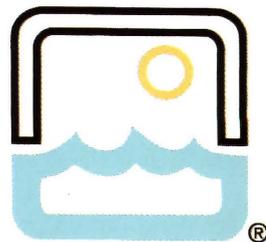
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stuart narofsky

Why did you become an architect?

I spent two years studying engineering and I was bored. I took an elective on the introduction to architecture and was hooked, so I changed schools and transferred into architecture.

What is the best thing about being an architect?

Every day is different.

What would you do if you weren't an architect?

I'd be a musician.

Do you have an architectural philosophy?

Philosophically, I come from the Luis Barragán school of architecture. My idea is to work toward honing the most complex ideas into the simplest composition.

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Is it more fun designing a vacation home by the water?

The homes I have been involved with, especially near the water, have been much more relaxed in design. And clients have allowed me to have more latitude with materials.

What are some of the challenges of designing a home by the shore?

Soil that requires special footings and wind conditions. One of the biggest problems is keeping horizontal rain out of windows and doors.

What do you do in your spare time?

Play guitar. I also enjoy skiing and designing furniture.

What is your greatest pleasure?

Running at six o'clock in the morning with my springer spaniel.

What is your greatest indulgence?

I buy every book I can get my hands on. Our living room floor has books piled like skyscrapers.

What are you currently reading?

I'm about to wrap up *A Confederacy of Dunces*. It's a hysterically funny book.

What kind of car do you drive and why?

A 1999 Audi; four-wheel drive was important for skiing.

What is your dream project?

Right now my dream is my own vacation house on the boards. I am planning to start construction soon. **ra**

Stuart Narofsky, AIA, is a founding principal of N2 Design Group in New York City. A former president of the Long Island Chapter of the AIA, Narofsky teaches part-time at the New York Institute of Technology.



Photo: Steven Freeman