

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and dark pants, is sitting on a wooden kitchen island. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The kitchen has white cabinets, a stainless steel sink with a faucet, and a bowl of red tomatoes on the counter. A chandelier is visible in the background.

residential
architect

A HANLEY-WOOD PUBLICATION / MARCH 2002

kitchen chameleon

georgie kajer's work
stands out
by blending in

cheng's booth business / escape from graphisoft
should you build? / rescue missions /
e-faucet revolution / mass according to gropius

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ONE DEDICATED REP • ONE PERSON

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Georgie Kajer's kitchens and baths stand out by blending in. Above and cover photos by Mark Robert Halper.

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In Remodelville U.S.A., also known as Pasadena, Calif., one residential architect tries to honor the originals while making them livable.

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Nothing revives houses like daring kitchen and bath remodels. Three great saves—in California, Washington, and Maryland.

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Walter Gropius' home away from Bauhaus.

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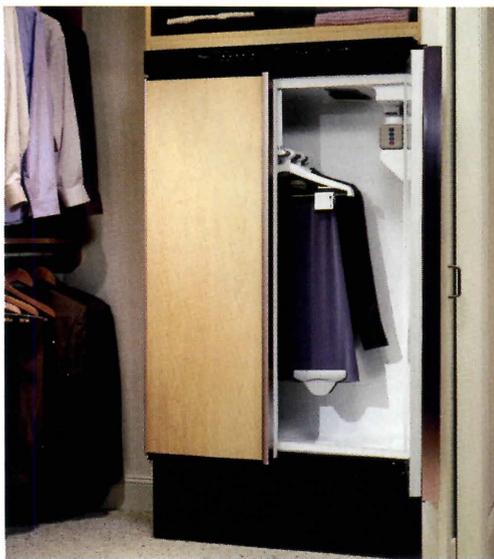
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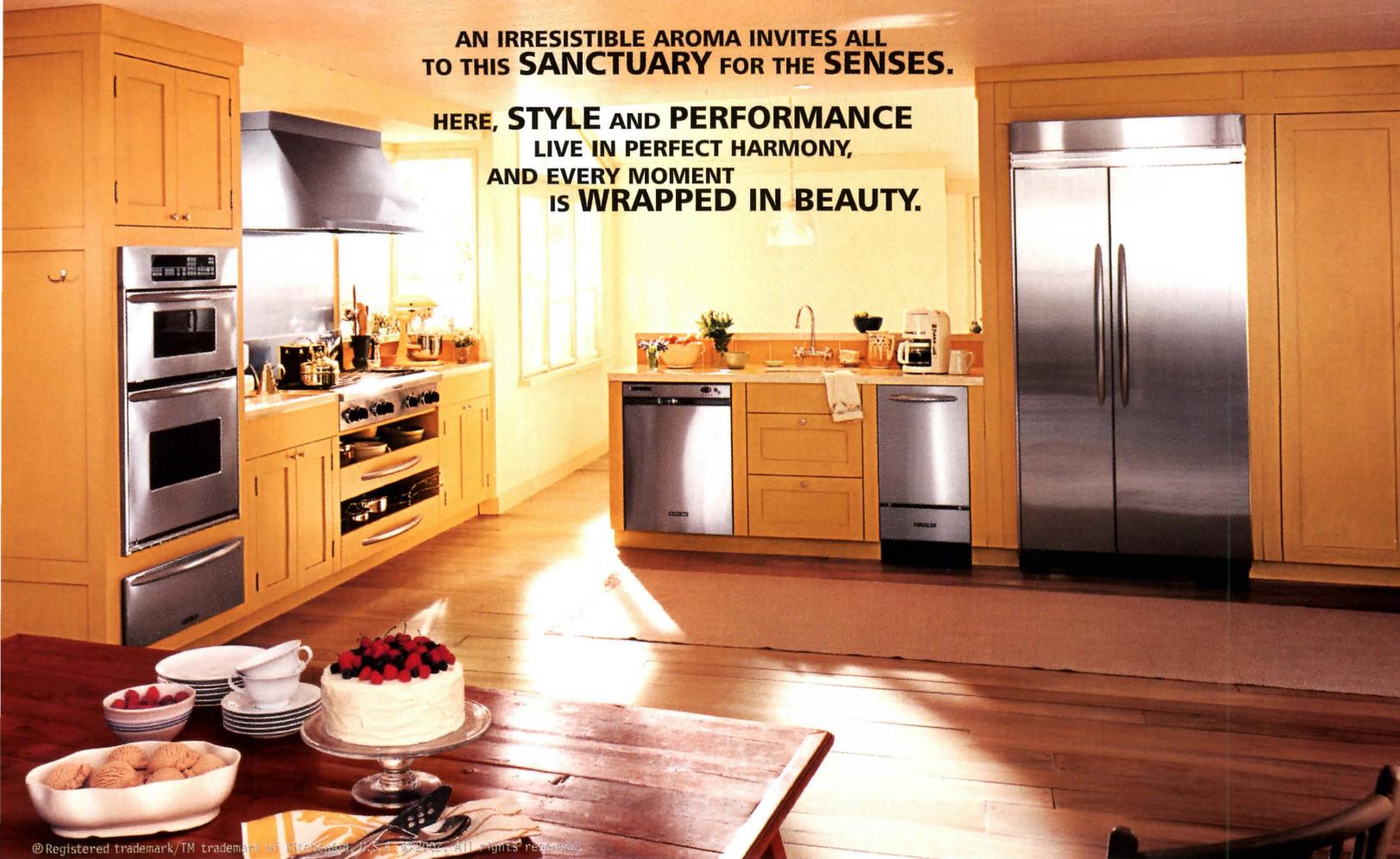
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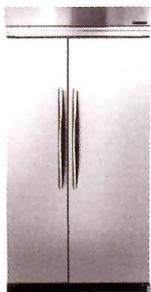
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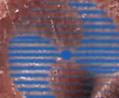
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 Published by Hanley-Wood, LLC
Publisher of BUILDER, BUILDING PRODUCTS, CUSTOM HOME, HANLEY-WOOD'S TOOLS OF THE TRADE,
PROSALES, REMODELING, THE JOURNAL OF LIGHT CONSTRUCTION, and *residential architect*

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Volume 6, number 2, *residential architect* (ISSN 1093-359X) is published 9 times a year in 2002 by Hanley-Wood, LLC, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005. Copyright 2002 by Hanley-Wood, LLC. Opinions expressed are those of the authors or persons quoted and not necessarily those of Hanley-Wood. Reproductions in whole or in part prohibited without prior written authorization. *residential architect* is sent free of charge to qualified readers involved in the residential home design market. The publisher reserves the right to determine qualification criteria. Out-of-field subscription rates are: U.S., \$39.95; U.S. students, \$19.99; Canada and all other countries, US\$49.95; airmail is additional. Single-copy price is \$10.00. For subscription information write to: *residential architect*, P.O. Box 3241, Northbrook, IL 60065-3241. **Subscriber customer service:** 888.269.8410 / **Fax:** 847.291.4816. **Reprints:** 212.221.9595, ext. 333. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to: *residential architect*, P.O. Box 3241, Northbrook, IL 60065-3241. This issue mailed in regional editions.

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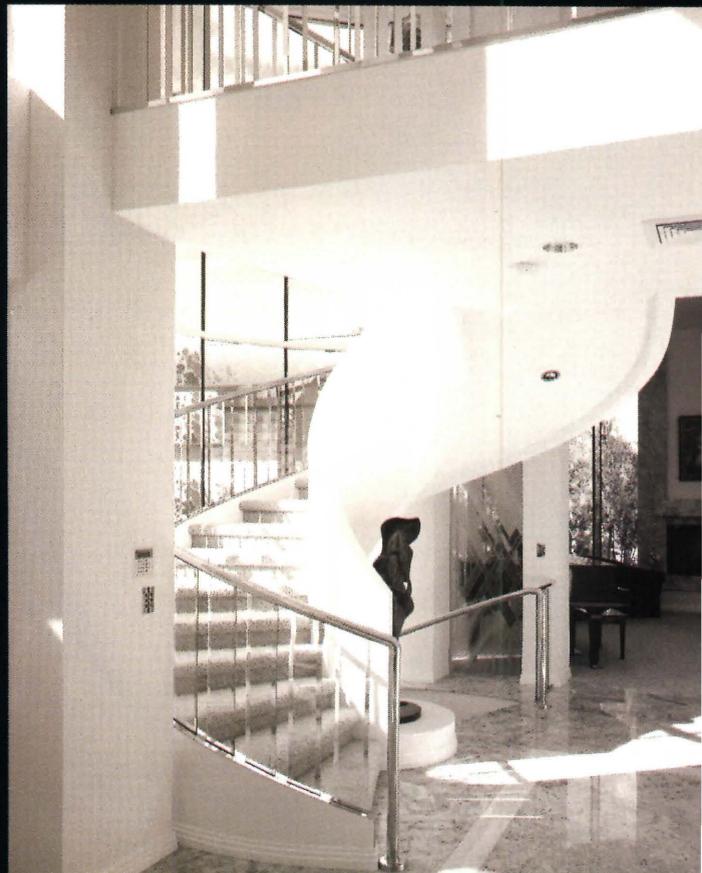
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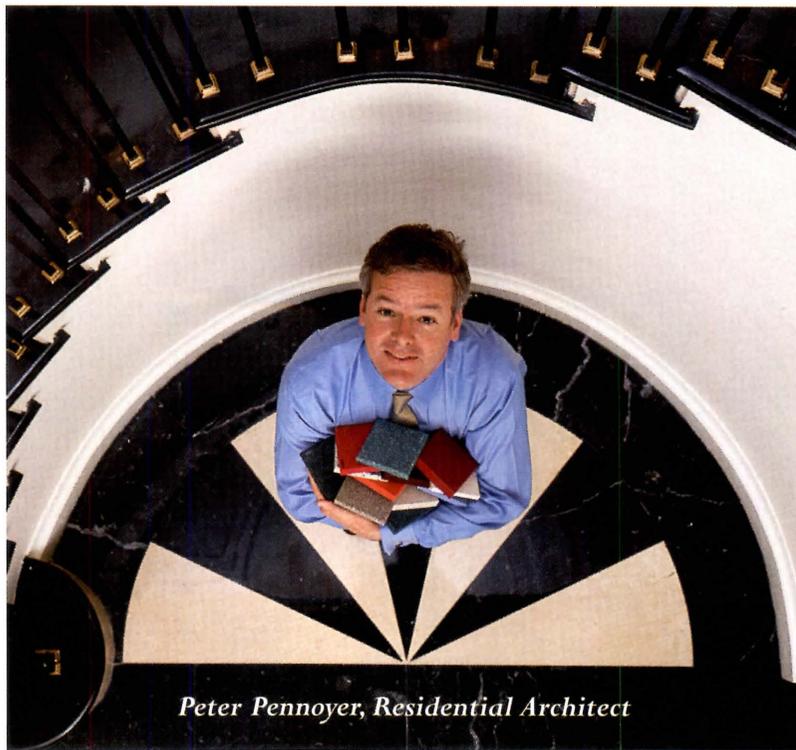
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Peter Pennoyer, Residential Architect

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from the editor

this story isn't about you

and you make every effort to keep it that way

by s. claire conroy

I've just heard an appalling story. It's the kind of story that gets passed along the grapevine, becoming more damning with each retelling. It goes like this: A couple just spent a great deal of time, effort, and money substantially renovating their home. Their project was the typical back-of-the-house blowout to gain a new family room, kitchen, and second-floor master suite. Unlike most people, who rely on design/build remodeling contractors to do this sort of work, they hired an architect. In fact, they hired the hottest architect in town to guide them in planning, designing, and managing the project. They appeared to do everything right, but somehow something went terribly wrong.

The couple, both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about residential design, were very excited by the opportunity to remake their house to suit themselves. They were even willing to depart a little from the straight and narrow in the architectural style. Something a tad avant-garde and edgy was fine with them. Mostly, they wanted their cramped tract house to feel

more open, warm, and bright. Again, these are all very typical requests. Surely, the experienced and talented architect would have no problem succeeding at this fairly basic assignment.

At first, it seemed like he did succeed. The resulting renovation looks handsome enough. It would probably show well on the pages of this magazine. And yet, it's a failure. After moving into their new, wide open bedroom, the couple discovered that they felt ill at ease in the space. Maybe it's the newness of it, they thought. They gave it some more time. The feeling didn't go away. Finally, they turned to each other and admitted the awful truth—they were fundamentally uncomfortable in the room. It's a feeling they never had in their dinky old bedroom.

So, they've now moved back into that old bedroom, where they're once again getting a good night's sleep. I don't know if they've told their architect what happened, but this is a story that should keep all residential architects up at night. It is a classic cautionary tale. Nothing about this client-architect relationship set off anyone's alarm bells. Indeed, it held a great deal



Mark Robert Halper

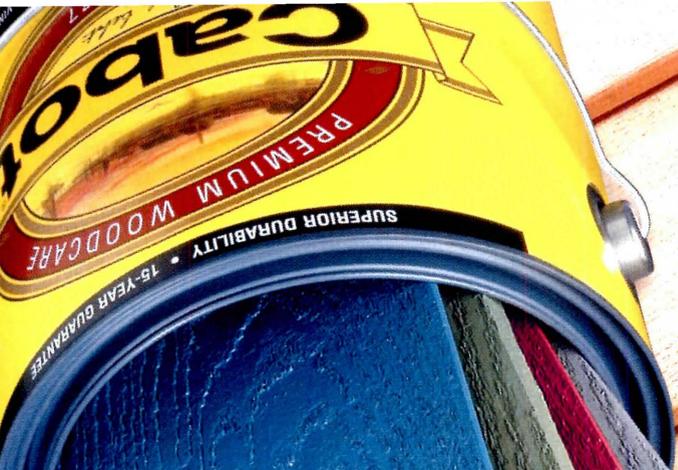
of promise for both parties. And still, it spun out of control. So much so, the renovation is not only a disappointment to the clients, it is in a significant way unlivable. Thank goodness the clients had some of the old house left to retreat to!

What's the take-away from this story? The architect failed to educate, listen to, and communicate with his clients. And it's a very easy trap to fall into with seemingly savvy, eager clients. You think you can use shorthand with them and they'll just follow along. They're afraid to admit how lost they're getting during the process, so they keep their mouths shut instead of asking questions or confronting you. They

figure they'll just trust you to make it turn out fine—because you're the best architect in town.

That's a path to disaster, and it's up to you to keep everyone off of it. Don't just ask your clients if they understand your design, make sure you ask them—repeatedly—if you understand what they want. After all, your priority is to give your clients what they want. Right? This story couldn't be about you. **ra**

Questions or comments?
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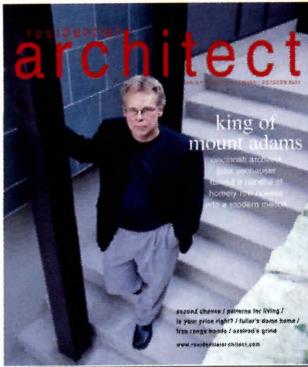


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letters

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



a bid for rebuilding

This letter is in response to your excellent, provocative editorial in the October 2001 issue of *residential architect* (page 13).

Architect Minoru Yamasaki should, in my opinion, be praised for the limited number of lives lost in the September 11, 2001, tragedy of the bombing of the World Trade Center towers in New York. I suspect “the pancake” structural failure of the towers was designed. Think of the additional collateral loss if the towers had “toppled” instead, which would be the result of a too-rigid structural framing design.

This event has changed the way of life for millions of Americans, and many others throughout the world. This tragedy, in my opinion, clarifies the need for a reevaluation of our

tall-building–evacuation design criteria: stairs, elevators, and structural design.

My personal feeling is that we should rebuild the towers along with an appropriate memorial.

*Phillip B. Withrow,
Architect
Dunlap, Ill.*

master's voice

May I add my rebuttal to the Letters column (page 12) in your November/December 2001 issue? William J. Mello Jr. comments about the “master builder” (architect) but makes no mention of construction skills. In my 55 years as a designer/draftsman, I soon learned that the practical hands-on knowledge of the building trades is essential to a living, working design. In the same column, Donald Gore makes the same point very well.

Also in that issue, “master builder” Sam Mockbee (page 40) has designed a metal roof on his Shiloh

Falls home that has no rain-water collection, but allows the water to drain off directly at the foot of the brick retaining wall, where it will ultimately compromise the integrity of the footing.

On Mr. Mockbee’s Barton residence, how did he get the narrow concrete stair to the screened porch approved with no semblance of railing on a stair over 6 feet high?

To continue, Mr. Mockbee’s Butterfly House has a single house stair with no sign of railing. Does he expect [homeowner] Mrs. Harris to soon have her visitors join her in a wheelchair after they fall off the unprotected stair?

A redeeming feature of Mr. Mockbee’s Cook residence is the well-placed upholstered chairs in the living room, seemingly to cushion the fall of guests tumbling off the unprotected edge of the loft.

Design flaws like these are not Mr. Mockbee’s alone, but seem to be very common with “master

builders” making a name and following for themselves at the expense of their clients and good design.

In my opinion, good design is not determined by how much of the alphabet follows your name or how visionary you think you are, but by how well it serves the needs and budgets of your clients.

All of us pushing a pencil or mouse should remember one thing first, last, and always: “customer first.”

Please continue with *residential architect*, as it is the one trade periodical that even comes close to the real world of residential design, [whether] by architect, “master builder,” designer, or talented draftsman.

*Paul Coykendall,
Designs by Paul
Stockton, Calif.*

The editor replies: Samuel Mockbee, who died recently of leukemia, is, tragically, no longer here to rebut these observations about his designs. So, please allow me to remind all our readers that photographs can be deceiving and should not be the basis for conclusions about code issues and engineering deficiencies.

“good design is not determined by how much of the alphabet follows your name ... but by how well it serves the needs and budgets of your clients.”

home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design

show business

In Fu-Tung Cheng's hands, countertops turn tactile and sinuous, range hoods become Calders for the kitchen, and cutting boards and trivets are molded into elegant work surfaces. Once again, the designer's work will show up at the kitchen and bath party in Chicago next month, a high point among the *crème de la cuisine*.

Equal parts efficiency and fine art, Cheng Design's prototypes propose new materials, shapes, and ways of thinking about the kitchen (see also page 56). A vignette that Sub-Zero commissioned for its booth at the Kitchen/Bath Industry Show includes a butcher block embedded in an island of Geocrete, a concrete product trademarked by Cheng Products, Cheng Design's sister firm. "Sub-Zero saw this as a way to attract people," Cheng

says, "and to show they were willing to look at the cutting edge."

The Berkeley, Calif., firm's previous installation, for cabinetmaker St. Charles' show-booth circuit, was more art than product. It combined a concrete countertop with lush wheatgrass and water trickling through a 16-foot sluice made of beeswax and stainless steel wire. "We want to do something really different that shows how beautiful the material is," says marketing director Bonnie Thomas.

The exhibits take about five months to create—"about the same time as a real kitchen," Cheng says. To prepare for a spring show, he completes a conceptual sketch in September. Staff designers detail the ideas, draw up construction documents, and sub out the fabrication of custom components. By the end of January, everything is crated and on the truck.

"If you're with the big boys, you're first priority at the loading dock," Cheng says, "which is good, because it takes about eight days to set it up." Another advantage to coattailing is the cost savings. "Our sponsors spent \$150,000 on one of the booths," Cheng says. "Our part was about \$40,000, and in three days you tear it down."

Still, the investments have netted 13,000 card swipes that make up a direct-mail database. "We've gotten a lot of recognition for stimulating an otherwise staid industry," Cheng says. "I try to make sure my designs are practical for cooking—I don't want to reach too far. But there's an emotional part of design you have to consider, or every job we do would just be engineered."—*cheryl weber*



Photos: Peter Leach

Retro meets Modern on this trade-show-exhibited cooking countertop, in which Cheng combined parts from a classic 1930s Chambers stove with Pyrolave, a lava stone from France that's enameled and fired. Red crystals under the burners are lit from below to evoke glowing embers.





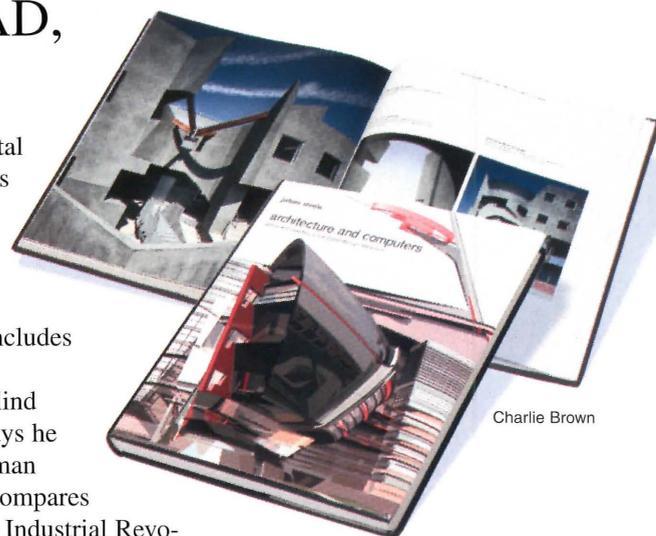
the good, the CAD, and the ugly

This coffee-table guide to digital architecture also tours today's most stylish designs. Featured projects include the latest by Eisenman, Foster and Partners, and Gehry. Most are large public works; the book includes only a few residences.

Eschewing what he calls the "blind faith" of techno-worship, Steele says he seeks to launch a debate about human values in a technological era. He compares our current juncture with the early Industrial Revolution, when William Morris and others argued for an Arts and Crafts antidote to mechanization.

With its alluring images and dense prose, the book makes a tacit argument for computer graphics. Yet Steele's chapter on Computer Aided Three-Dimensional Interactive Applications (CATIA), developed for aerospace design and adapted by Gehry, makes it clear that digital design has not supplanted traditional media.

To wit, Gehry still prefers modeling and collage for studies. Computer programs become a sophisticated tool to transfer each wriggle into accurate construction drawings.—*michael leccese*



Charlie Brown

Architecture and Computers: Action and Reaction in the Digital Design Revolution. *James Steele*. 240 pp.; 230 illustrations. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications. \$50 (hardcover). www.watsonguptill.com.

shelf fulfillment

Marcel Breuer, Architect: The Career and the Buildings. *Isabelle Hyman*. 384 pp. New York: Harry N. Abrams. \$85 (hardcover). 800.759.0190. Architectural historian Isabelle Hyman pored over extensive unpublished archival materials and hundreds of photographs, plans, and sketches to produce this comprehensive study of Breuer's work. The book includes 295 illustrations.

Wood: New Directions in Design and Architecture. *Naomi Stungo*. 240 pp. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. \$29.95 (paperback). 800.722.6657. An examination of 31 timber-built structures from around the globe, illustrated with more than 350 color photographs as well as drawings, site plans, and floor plans.

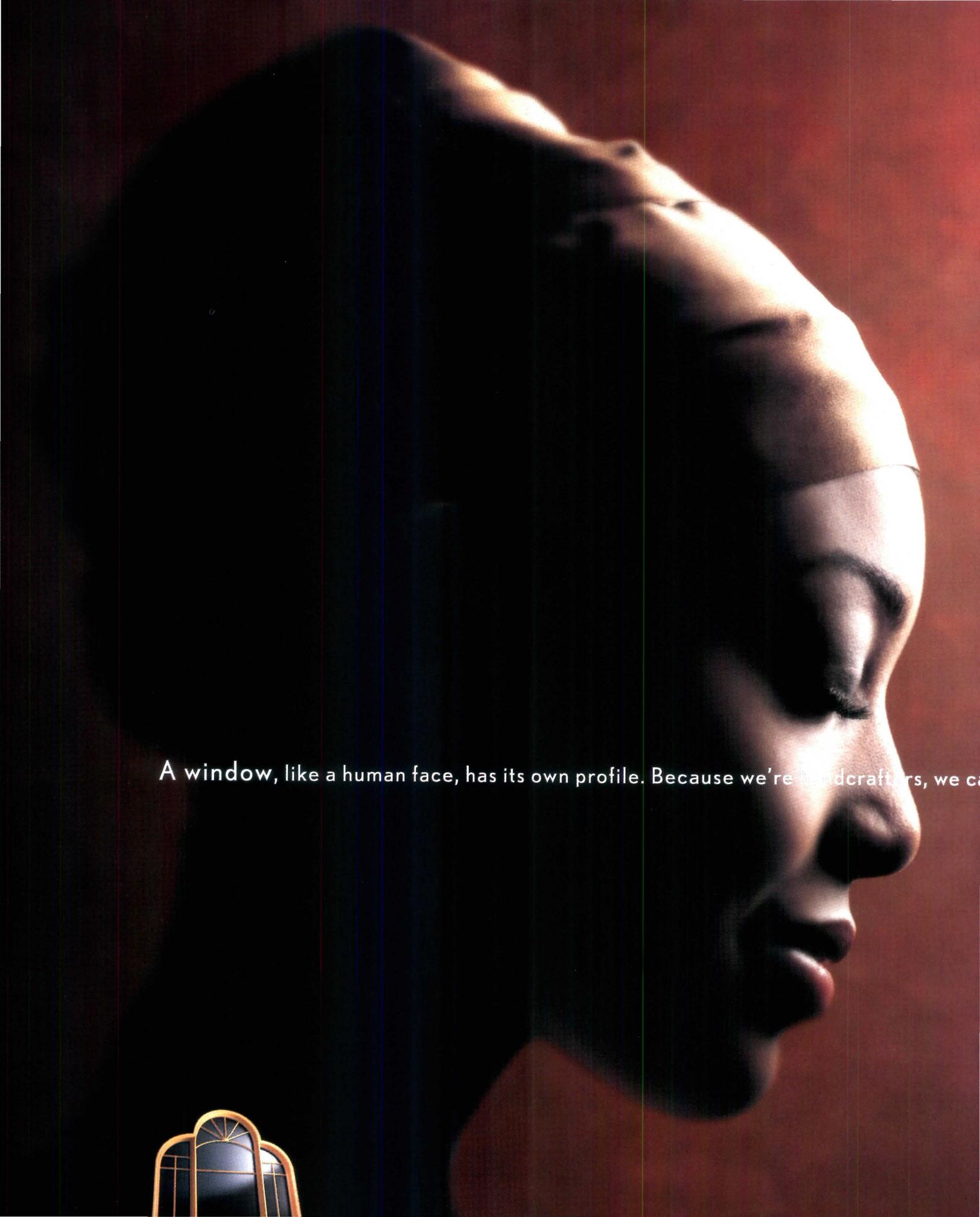
Frank Lloyd Wright & Lewis Mumford: Thirty Years of Correspondence. *Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer and Robert Wojtowicz, editors*. 256 pp. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. \$27.50 (cloth cover). 212.995.9620. Between 1926 and 1958, Wright and architecture critic Mumford carried on an intense correspondence covering topics as varied as Wright's stature as an American architect, the rise of the International Style, and political events around the world. The 150 letters contained in this book provide an intimate glimpse into the minds of these two influential figures.

—*amy doherty*

Parallel to the cooktop shown on the opposite page, a long Geocrete counter (above) features a 16-foot channel lined with slate and semi-precious stones. Water trickles through the spillway to a rice-pounding stone, which stands in a pool of water lined with fresh wheatgrass.

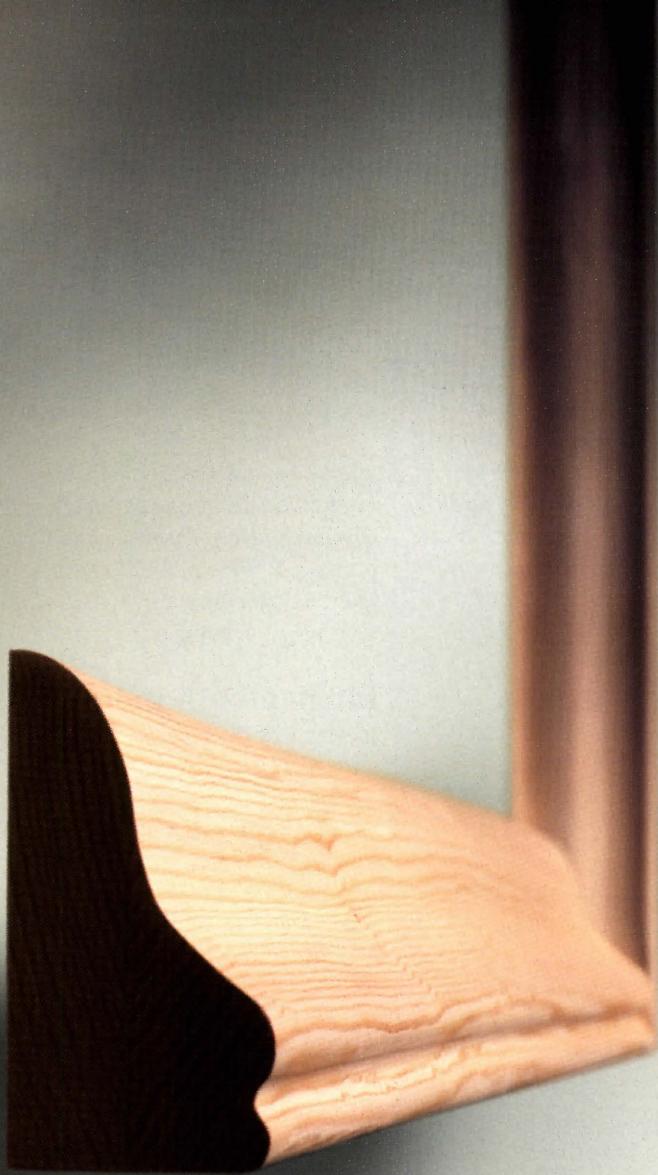
the exhibits take about
five months to create—
“about the same time as
a real kitchen.”

—*fu-tung cheng*

A dramatic, low-key photograph of a woman's profile, facing right. Her face is mostly in shadow, with a soft light highlighting her forehead, nose, and lips. The background is a warm, reddish-brown wall. The overall mood is intimate and artistic.

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submission deadline: march 15

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For an entry form or more information, call 718.783.3160 or visit www.italiatile.com.

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housing design competition

deadline: april 1

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taken by design: photographs from the institute of design, 1937–1971

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march 2–may 12

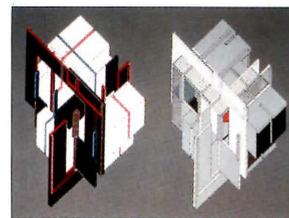


The Art Institute of Chicago: Peabody Fund

This exhibition showcases the best design photography from the Institute of Design's faculty and students, including Arthur Seigel's dye imbibition print (left), taken in 1950 and titled "Green Building, Red Door." For museum hours, call 312.443.3600 or visit www.artic.edu.

perfect acts of architecture

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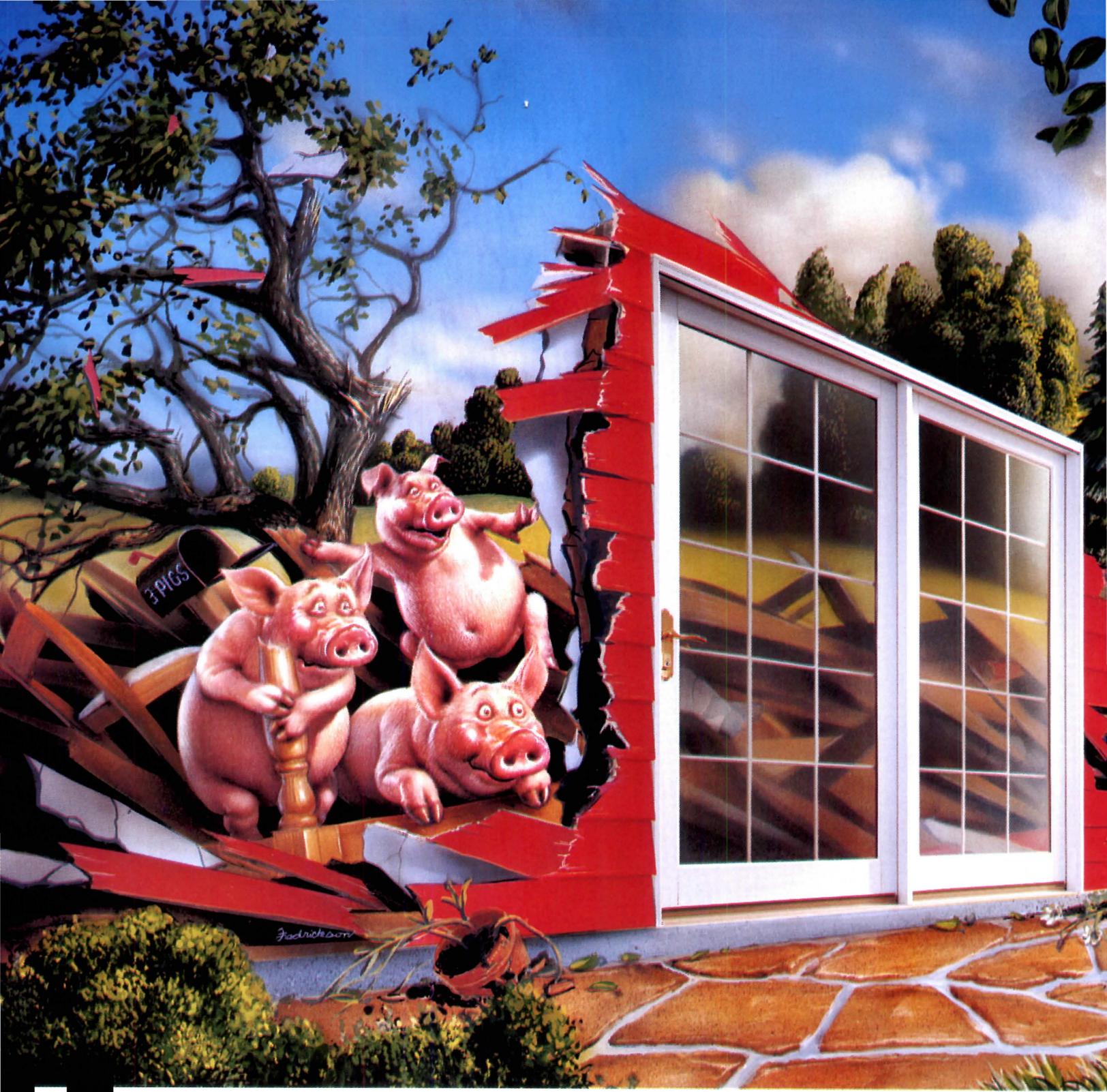
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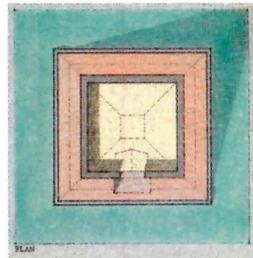
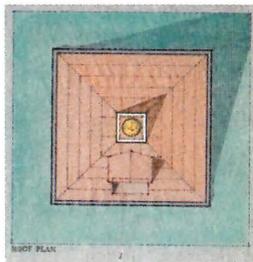
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landmark decision

Seaside, Fla., is throwing itself a 20th birthday party. And instead of a cake, it's decided it wants a shiny new landmark. To find one, the Neo-Traditional town held the Seaside Ceremonial Landmark Competition. Residential architect Michael Medick, AIA, won the competition with an object he says will evolve along with the community: It's a 12-foot-tall, copper-coated, pyramidal time capsule that'll hold items from Seaside's collaborators and residents. "The pyramid is a timeless form, but it can be updated with new materials," says Medick, senior principal at Medick & Associates in Baltimore. "We chose copper because its appearance will constantly change according to the sun's position and the weather." Seaside founder Robert Davis is considering several sites for the project; when complete, the time capsule will be sealed for 80 years and opened on the town's 100th anniversary, in 2082.

An eternal flame tops Michael Medick's winning entry in the Seaside Ceremonial Landmark Competition. The pyramid peaks at 12 feet and sits on a 14-square-foot base.



choices in the hood

With seven choices of chimneys plus 27 glass or stainless screen options, we effectively have 189 possible design combinations," says Allen Lombard of the patented modular range-hood system from Sirius. Lombard, the North American representative for Italy-based Sirius, goes on to explain that if those variations fail to light your fire, custom screens can easily be fitted to the chimneys, or the power pack can be inserted into a completely custom-made design. Want another option? The power packs are available as either manual or wireless remote-operated units.

Not just another pretty hood, Sirius is serious about effective technology inside its products. According to the maker, the chimney's narrow 4-inch opening intensifies suction while high static pressure forces the air quickly through the ducts and out of the home. The four-speed fan runs at an unobtrusive 59 decibels maximum; other standard features include dishwasher-safe filters, halogen lamps, a 15-minute timer, and a filter-washing warning system.

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wood you know

Locating and purchasing environmentally responsible wood is now much easier, thanks to a new online resource from the Portland, Ore.-based Certified Forest Products Council (CFPC).

Launched last October, certifiedwood.org allows users to search worldwide all companies with products certified by the Mexico-based

Forest Stewardship Council, an international nonprofit organization. Users can search by product type, wood species, location, and vendor. If an architect wants to check up on a company's purported certification, the Web site has a section searchable by certification number, certifying body, and type of certification.

The site is not the first of its kind, but Jason

Grant, CFPC's director of market development, says it's the most flexible, searchable, and comprehensive. "This site accomplishes everything the others failed to do," he claims.

Despite its breadth and range, the site is "not a reflection of what's in stock," Grant explains, "but it gives an idea of who can get certain products for you."—*nigel f. maynard*



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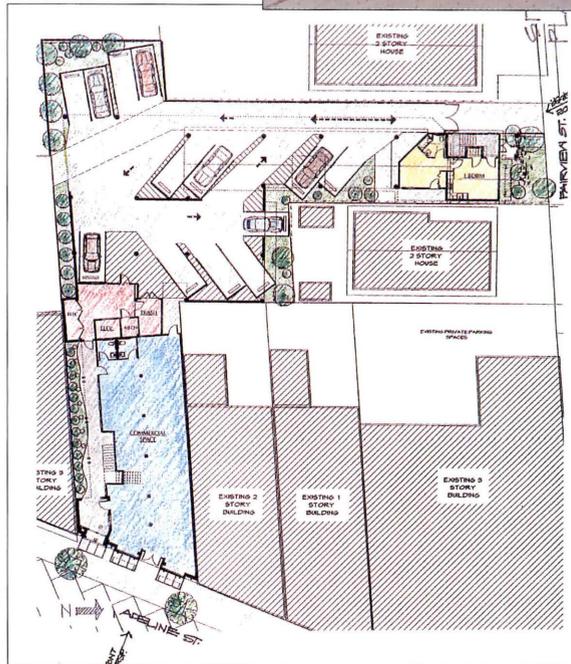
on the boards / gracious accommodations

Sensitivity to the needs of the physically disabled comes naturally to Berkeley, Calif., architect Erick Mikiten, AIA. Like most other architects, he likes to solve difficult design problems. And he uses a wheelchair himself. Mikiten has applied his personal experience and his skill in designing low-income housing to The Adeline Apartments, a mixed-use building in Berkeley whose 19 residential units are targeted exclusively at physically disabled, low-income residents.

The Adeline's site is a tight, L-shaped one, wedged in among two mixed-use buildings and a residence. Rather than have the entire three-story structure brushing right up against its neighbors, Mikiten opted to design open-air breezeways into the first and second floors. In addition to providing a bit of breathing room, the

breezeways allow extra sunlight into the building. The ground floor also contains 15 rear parking spaces, most of which are reserved for residents. Parking for the 2,100 square feet of ground-floor retail consists of off-street, diagonal spaces in front of the building.

Mikiten faced strong pressure from the Berkeley design review committee to create a project that would continue the neighborhood's traditional Victorian- and Craftsman-style fabric. "The slot of a lot



Renderings courtesy Mikiten Architecture

The Adeline's cement board siding and paneling keep it within the context of neighboring clapboard buildings and within its tight budget.

that we had was actually nice," he says. "Because it was so narrow, the only side of the building that we really needed to worry about materials for was the front facade." He managed to stretch his exterior-materials budget to include standard-size brick, ceramic tile, and a combination of wood and prefabricated

metal trim for the front bay windows. To accommodate wheelchairs, he included wide walkways with bump-outs so two chairs approaching from opposite directions can pass each other, adjustable-height countertops in the units' kitchens, and wall-hung sinks instead of vanities.

The developer of The Adeline is locally based Resources for Community Development; construction on the project began this past fall.—*m.d.*

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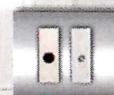
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david marlatt morphed from architect to software executive,
and back again.

by david marlatt, aia

I'm an architect, but I haven't always practiced as one. I did so for a few years after architecture school, and then for 13 years I worked in the CAD software business in sales, marketing, and management roles. Leaving the profession isn't that unusual, but what makes my case different is the fact that I returned. Since 1999, I have operated my own firm in San Francisco, specializing in residential design.

I veered from architecture into business by accident. I was working mainly on single- and multifamily housing at a small Atlanta firm in the early to mid-1980s. The firm was reasonably successful, but after some time I was ready to move on. Newly single and out of debt, I decided to move to Paris and try a few months of bohemian life before relaunching my architectural career.

paris mismatch

As a bohemian I was, and remain, a total failure. I panicked before I even left Atlanta and arranged a part-time teaching job with my *alma mater's* study-abroad program at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. While teaching there, I met a French archi-



Courtesy DNM Architect

This 3,500-square-foot house in Point Richmond, Calif., by DNM Architect, will perch above the San Francisco Bay on a steel platform that in turn is supported by concrete pilings.

tect who was starting a company to sell Mac-based 3-D modeling software in the United States. He asked me if I could translate their software manual and help present it at the San Francisco MacWorld Show in 1987. I agreed and ran to W.H. Smith on the rue de Rivoli to purchase a French-English dictionary. Little did I realize that, in my zest to survive in Paris, I had just left both bohemia and architecture behind.

We managed to complete the manuals and show our stuff at MacWorld with encouraging, but not profitable, results. On the flight

home, my French colleague admitted that he did not have enough money to continue paying me as a contract worker, and offered a full-time, salaried position instead. I have to confess that this made sense to me, as it did to him. I accepted, and my next paycheck came about a year later.

The company did grow, however, and I grew with it. I learned about business plans and balance sheets, rapid growth (and layoffs), sales, marketing, and the differences between accounting and finance. It was exciting; being part of a team developing new soft-

ware is not very different from being the developer, architect, and contractor of a building. Most of our customers were architects, so I met a broad spectrum of professionals from around the world. I still thought of myself as an architect, but I rationalized that working for the software company gave me a reason to remain in Paris.

company man

A few years went by and I was married with a son. My wife and I decided it was time to move back to the States, so we relocated to

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THE WRAP THAT WON'T RIP.

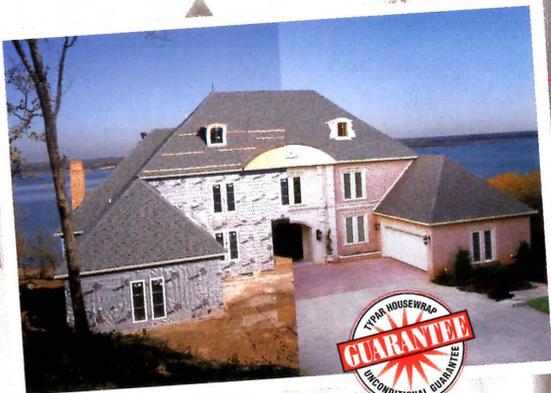
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San Francisco. I took a position with Graphisoft, a Hungarian company with which I'd worked in Paris, managing its U.S. office. I could no longer rationalize my software career by living abroad, but I had the opportunity to get even closer to the architecture profession and—I hoped—serve it by advancing the use of 3-D CAD technology. As Graphisoft grew, so did my skills and business knowledge. I found myself being a client of PR agencies, programmers, and other designers.

I enjoyed working with architects the most, however, and never doubted my true profession. I got to meet firms of all sizes and spend time with some famous architects, as well.

“what architects do, even when they don't do buildings, is assemble general knowledge and bring spatial thinking to a situation.”

We sponsored a CAD competition with the student chapter of the AIA called something dull like the AIA Student CAD Competition. Sir Norman Foster (now Lord Norman Foster) chaired our first jury! I spent six hours with Sir Norman evaluating entries and talking technology, at the end of which he suggested that since our com-

pany was paying for the competition, we should name it after ourselves. I remember thinking, “Man, they don't call you Sir for nuthin',” and since then we have called the competition the Graphisoft Prize.

After a five-year stint as president of the U.S. office, I became vice president of marketing communications. A year or so into that job, I faced a moment of truth I had been avoiding. Our company had grown over the years into a worldwide player and was about to become publicly traded. We were under increasing pressure to improve our performance in all areas. As someone who behaved more like an architect on sabbatical than a software executive, I wavered in my com-



mitment to take my career to the next level needed by the company. My experience at Graphisoft offered me the financial security to change careers once more, and I did so in the spring of 1999.

new beginning

I am still a part-time technology consultant for an Australian company, but



Rendering and photo courtesy DNM Architect

A 2,900-square-foot renovation and addition in San Rafael, Calif., is another one of Marlatt's post-Graphisoft projects.

most of my time is spent in a small practice, trying to grow one house and one addition at a time. So far, my acquired business skills haven't helped me as much as I thought they would. There is some crossover value, but building a practice mainly requires relationships and an intimate knowledge of the building process. When I left Graphisoft, my building knowledge was rusty and my relationships were with other architects, not potential clients. I knew a lot about product marketing, but, with nothing built in 14 years, I had no “product” to market.

There is one business idea I have been able to apply in my practice: customer service. My software career taught me the importance of meeting commitments, being proactive, and exceeding expectations. I have also seen that, while I

don't need to produce pro forma balance sheets or market studies for my projects, my professional clients feel comfortable knowing that I know what these are and perhaps better understand their priorities and preoccupations as a result.

It may be too early to offer much perspective. But I have felt for a long time that architecture is important beyond simple building design and is worth defending. What architects do, even when they don't do buildings, is assemble general knowledge and bring spatial thinking to a situation. Good design may not solve everything, but it is the answer to many problems. I may have left the practice of architecture for a time, but never its cause. *ra*

David Marlatt is principal of DNM Architect in San Francisco.

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if you build it, what will come?

design/build offers the potential for more risks and more rewards.

by cheryl weber

a thoughtful architect may have the best intentions, listening closely to the client, providing meticulous drawings, and keeping an eye on construction. But residential architecture is an endeavor that, even in the most adept hands, stretches the definition of success. By the end, the project is a triumph if it hasn't dragged on, change orders haven't run up the budget, and every design decision proves prescient.

But there is a model of practice that some architects believe gets them closer to perfection. It's design/build, where design and construction services are combined under one contract and, often, under one roof. For some, the term conjures up the mediocre work done by home builders and remodeling contractors who call themselves designers. And among licensed architects, design/build is more common on commercial projects—it's practiced in about one-third of the nonresidential market, according to David Johnston of the

Design-Build Institute of America, Washington, D.C. (www.dbia.org). There are, however, residential architects making the model work for them, in one form or another. They say it nurtures company profits and contented clients because it keeps projects on schedule and on budget. Equally important, it allows for the natural ebb and flow of design ideas.

In that regard, the design/build mentality evokes the historical notion of the architect as master builder. Schooled in design and craftsmanship, the architects of the American country houses in the early part of the 20th century personally supervised construction and often designed on site, even if they weren't the actual builder. Indeed, until about 15 years ago, the American Institute of Architects said architects must not build

what they design. It saw design/build as the proverbial fox guarding the henhouse, because architects could benefit financially from their design decisions. "The number of people who feel that way is diminishing," says the AIA's Richard Hayes, AIA. "If an architect is standing behind the seal given them by the state to uphold the health, safety, and welfare of clients, it isn't an issue."

What is an issue, of course, are the skills and preferences an architect

brings to his or her practice. Design/build isn't for everyone. "There's more risk in taking on a design/build project, and it takes more business sense than architects typically have," says Timothy Twomey, AIA, an architect and attorney with Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, Boston. "Certain kinds of people become architects, certain kinds of people become contractors. You have to think like a contractor would."

continued on page 34



Leo Espinosa



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in the house

Using both sides of the brain comes naturally for architect Paul Sieben, FAIA, Toledo, Ohio, who worked his way through architecture school as a contractor. His firm, WCBA, includes eight registered architects, two interns, and six individuals on the construction side. It employs project managers, construction superintendents, estimators, and schedulers, subbing out carpentry and other trades. While the firm designs all the projects it builds, it typically constructs only the larger ones—say, 15,000-square-foot custom homes and condominiums in the \$555,000-to-\$2-million range. “It has a lot to do with whether the client has an appetite to have a single point of responsibility,” Sieben says. “We find design/build is more familiar in this area for larger projects.

“I think it’s all economic reasons why we do it,” Sieben adds. “It’s a more economical way for the client to get a job done in the long run in terms of scheduling and costs.” On a recent project, for example, the day WCBA presented its concept for a college residence hall, it also quoted a fixed price on what the building would cost. A year later, it delivered the job within that fee. The company hit the mark because it

reducing the risks of design/build

Over the years, architects have become more willing to take the lead role in construction,” says architect and attorney Timothy Twomey, AIA, of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, Boston. “But they need to evaluate their risks. They should talk with an insurance advisor about issues such as capitalization, the ability to get insurance, and whether or not they need to be bonded.” Architects offering design and build under one roof, he says, might consider setting up the two as separate legal entities so that build problems don’t affect design services. Another way to reduce risk is to hire top-notch contractors to do the actual construction. “Talk to your lawyer about developing a standard business model if you’re going to do design/build with outside sources,” Twomey says. “How will you set it up? What will your contracts look like with owners, subs, and builders?”

Indeed, the differences that have traditionally put architects and builders at odds with each other can work to financial advantage in a creative partnership. “Designers have a tendency to keep working until they find the best solution, whereas contractors are schedule-driven,” says James Bradburn, FAIA, of Denver-based Fentress Bradburn Architects. “They want to get the job done as quickly as possible so they can make their money. A good design/build relationship will find ways around that tension.”

When you choose a contractor as a job partner, Bradburn recommends you look for someone who’s flexible and sympathetic to your goals as a designer. “Get people who can come out of being schedule-driven if something doesn’t work and you have to come up with a good solution,” he says, “someone who can say, ‘How else can I schedule this so it gives the designer time but doesn’t affect the critical path?’ And the architect needs to be sensitive to the builder’s concerns—‘Hey, there’s a concrete truck out there waiting and costing us lots of money.’”—C.W.

has the ability to conceptualize and price a design simultaneously. With architects and estimators on the design team, Sieben says, “if an architect has a question about what something’s going to cost, he can yell across the room and get an answer.”

Architect Tom Sampson, Behal Sampson Dietz, Columbus, Ohio, has noticed too that keeping costs on a short leash helps clients take other trouble spots in stride. “If we’re not surprising the client by the budget being out of whack, generally the proj-

ect goes rather smoothly,” says Sampson, whose firm specializes in custom homes and residential renovations. With its 15 architects and designers, 20 construction managers, and 25 carpenters, the company’s construction arm is three times as large as the design side. Sampson and his partners like doing construction because they can control the quality of the project. “We can carry out some of the detailing we might not get to if we only did the architecture,” he says. “We also get closer to the

client in the field and have more time to establish a sense of trust.” Not every client relishes that closeness, and BSD won’t build for every client, either. If the relationship wears thin, or if the firm is too busy, it reserves the right to bid out the job.

to the point

On its construction side, Milwaukee-based Design Group Three makes a distinction between new homes and renovation work. It farms out the custom homes

continued on page 36



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it designs but manages their construction. That's because a new-home client requires a different kind of care, says architect Alan Freysinger. "From an overhead standpoint, our guys are geared to the surprises and customer-service approach of remodeling," he says. "It's hard for them to shift gears."

Freysinger and his partner, architect Robert Prindeville, head up a carpentry staff of 13, plus a production manager. A lead carpenter on every job is trained to understand the design intent and get the most out

of subs. "We're able to hire the people we feel blend in well with us and train them up to the standard we want," Freysinger says. "Plus, the lead carpenter is organizing the job from a scheduling standpoint. He sees when subs aren't there, what must be done yet, and can take care of it in a phone call."

Not only does that tidy working arrangement get the job done better and faster, it eliminates the adversarial triangle that unwittingly exists between owner, architect, and contractor. At BSD, the project

architect is the client's go-to person from concept through construction. After a program and budget are determined, the architects and estimators get together to establish the approximate size and quality of the project. "The estimators give the architects some boundaries," Sampson says. "As that project goes through the architectural steps, the construction side of the business keeps an eye on its progress. So when we do the final cost, we can bring it in right on budget. Sharing the overhead structure allows us to

be more competitive." The firm also has the scoop on subs—the A list, the B list, and the never-in-your-life list. "When we bid the jobs out, subcontractors can help us finalize the engineering on them," Sampson says. "Over the years, it results in a better set of documents."

degrees of separation

Of course, that osmosis can occur with the right independent contractor, too. Over the years, Terra Verde Architects, Boulder, Colo., which

continued on page 38

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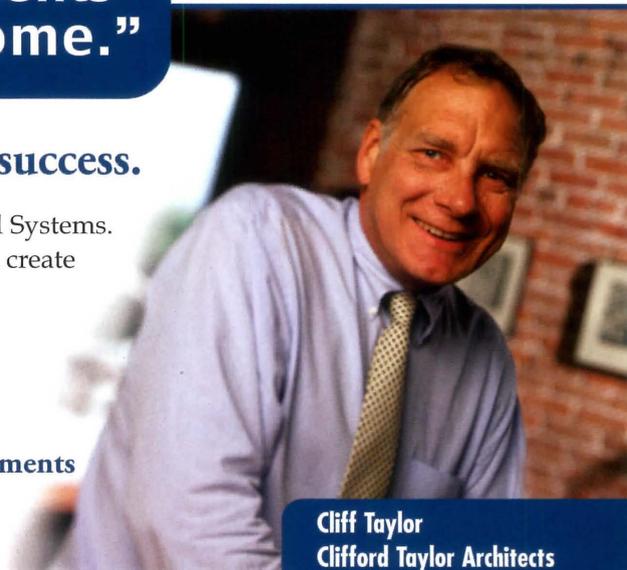
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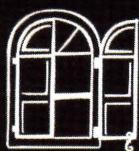
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designs single-family custom homes, has run design/build projects in several ways, from acting as an in-house builder or construction manager to joint ventures with outside contractors. "We started the concept as a way to take back control of the project," says Mark Quéripel, AIA. "I was designing so many houses that went out to builders who couldn't care less what the intent of the drawings was."

In the beginning, the firm produced its construction services internally, but soon discovered it could save

overhead by outsourcing. And referrals from other contractors increased its market share. Now the sole architect in his firm, Quéripel negotiates the best project delivery system for a given client. Sometimes commissions are design only. To deliver a long-distance job, he's hired subs and an outside construction manager. Then there's the \$3.5-million house he designed that's being built by another contractor while Quéripel manages construction. "Every single one of these services is another

source of revenue," he says.

Whether it's a builder or construction manager working under his contract, Quéripel introduces them to the project early on, revising the design and budget based on their feedback. And in the process of reviewing bids, he maintains a current database of pricing, so he knows what every material he's specing costs per square foot. "Because we started the company as a builder and gained significant expertise in that area, it makes custom clients feel very comfortable," Quéripel

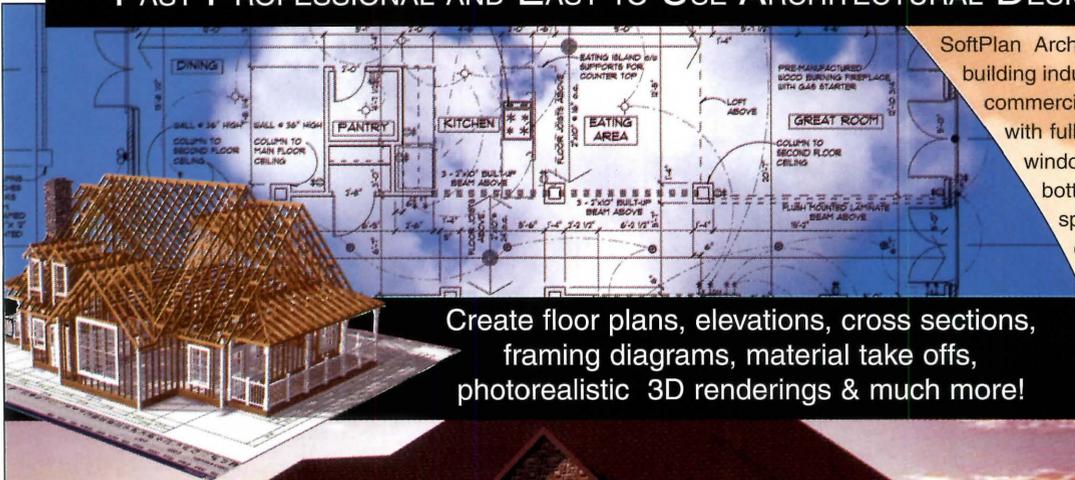
says. "What people are looking for, I think, is a simpler way of dealing with a 700-pound gorilla."

risk reduction

Architect and engineer Gary Black, Integrated Structures, Berkeley, Calif., tames the gorilla a little differently. On select projects, his firm acts as a general contractor by hiring the subs, but money is funneled through a joint checking account with the owner that requires both signatures. That account holds the lump-sum bank loan: hard costs, a 10-

continued on page 40

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percent contingency fee, and the management fee, eliminating the need for the firm to put its own money on the line—and collect it. “We have an open book,” Black says. “Clients know exactly what everything costs, and all con-

tingency money normally going to the contractor goes back into their building—we don’t get it, and the owner doesn’t get it. Our financial risk is quite reduced.”

The architects are free to modify the design as the

emerging building dictates, doing away with cumbersome change orders unless the owner wants something extra. “Often, we can roll it right out of the contingency budget to pay for it,” Black says. “For client extras, we add our

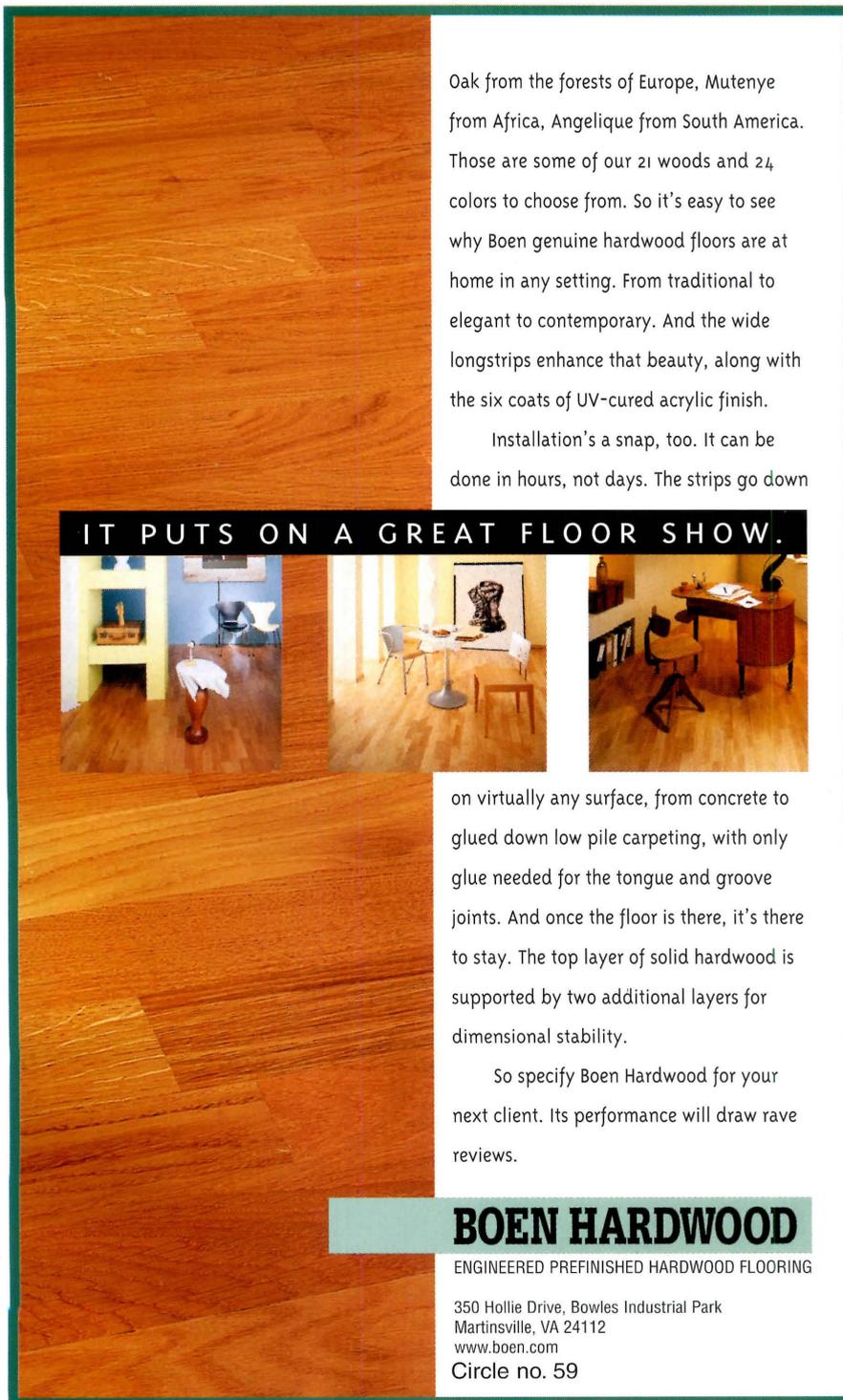
installation costs, but there’s no additional surcharge.”

Integrated Structures’ penchant for experimenting with unusual building systems, such as straw-bale construction and a concrete lattice structure for a homeless shelter, is its motive for doing design/build. “We’ve done so many wild and wacky things where we could hardly find a GC to take the thing on board,” Black says. The firm is using a slightly different model for a \$5-million monastery in Minnesota, where it will manage the construction of complex colored-tile patterns and cast-stone screens with intricate geometry. “We’ll lay out the whole facade in our warehouse, then ship it out and send someone to manage installation,” Black says. “The contractors like that, because it’s a big headache. It gives us an investment in the project and makes a real difference, whereas if we spend our energy to pour concrete in the foundation of a building, it doesn’t change the outcome.”

assets and liabilities

One of the pitfalls of doing continuous design, of course, is the inability to let go. In a reversal of the fox-and-hen scenario, rather than downgrading specs and pocketing the money, architects are

continued on page 42



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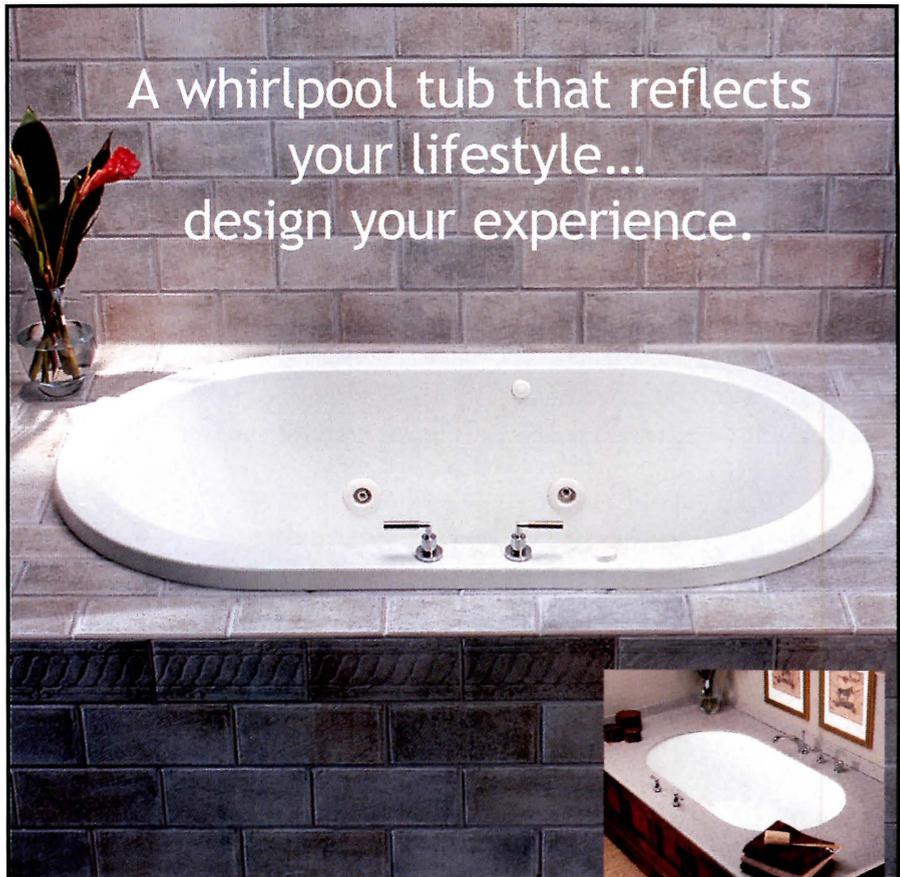
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more apt to hold up construction while they scratch their heads over a design problem, putting a crimp in cash flow. "Don't try to win every battle," Black advises. "Perfection isn't an option. Eighty-five percent is really good."

Failure to keep a firm grasp on the costs and the construction schedule—skills architects aren't taught in school—creates big problems. Architect David Poulton, AIA, The Poulton Group, a 13-year-old design/build firm in Lake Forest, Ill., started out offering construction in-house as a way to generate revenues while building his architecture

practice. "There's no question doing construction is a profit center for us now," he says. "But we've learned over time that we really are operating two businesses. You have the headaches of a second business. If you're not up on prices, lead times for materials, and who can supply them, you might be doubling and tripling costs, not to mention the time and energy you're putting into the job."

And when architects marry design with building, their liabilities change—for better and for worse. Poulton buys general liability insurance to cover the risks that come with

construction. On the other hand, "just doing architecture, I feel I have more liability," he says, "because in handing off a design for other people to interpret, I lose a certain amount of control." Sieben agrees. "Our insurance provider hasn't changed our premium, whether we're doing just architecture or design and construction," he says. "They like what we're doing." Quéripel's errors and omissions policy covers general liability, but when he takes on a construction project, the cost of a job-specific liability policy is written into the contract.

Despite those added complexities and risks, Quéripel prefers an entrepreneur's approach to architecture. Far too many architects can put a stellar design on paper, he believes, without understanding what goes into delivering the final product. "We see design/build as a direct value to clients," he says. "They get a project that's well-thought-through and functions when it's delivered to them. Our goal as architects is to build a better mousetrap." *ra*

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

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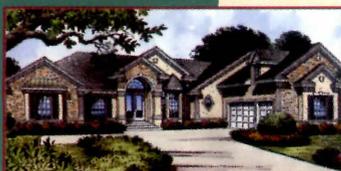
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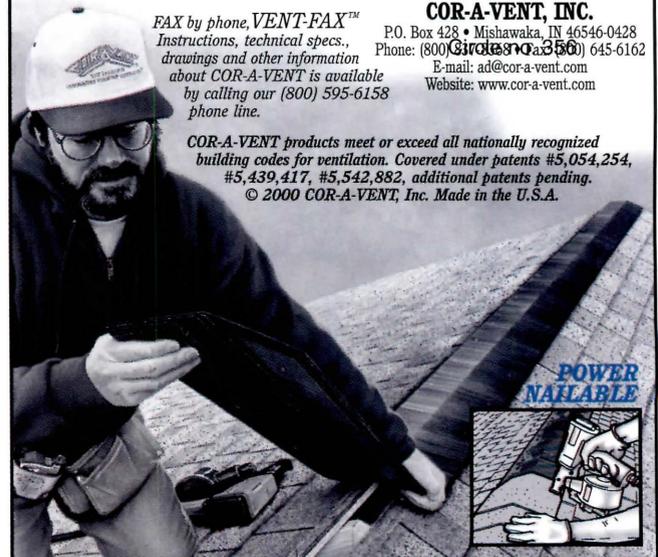
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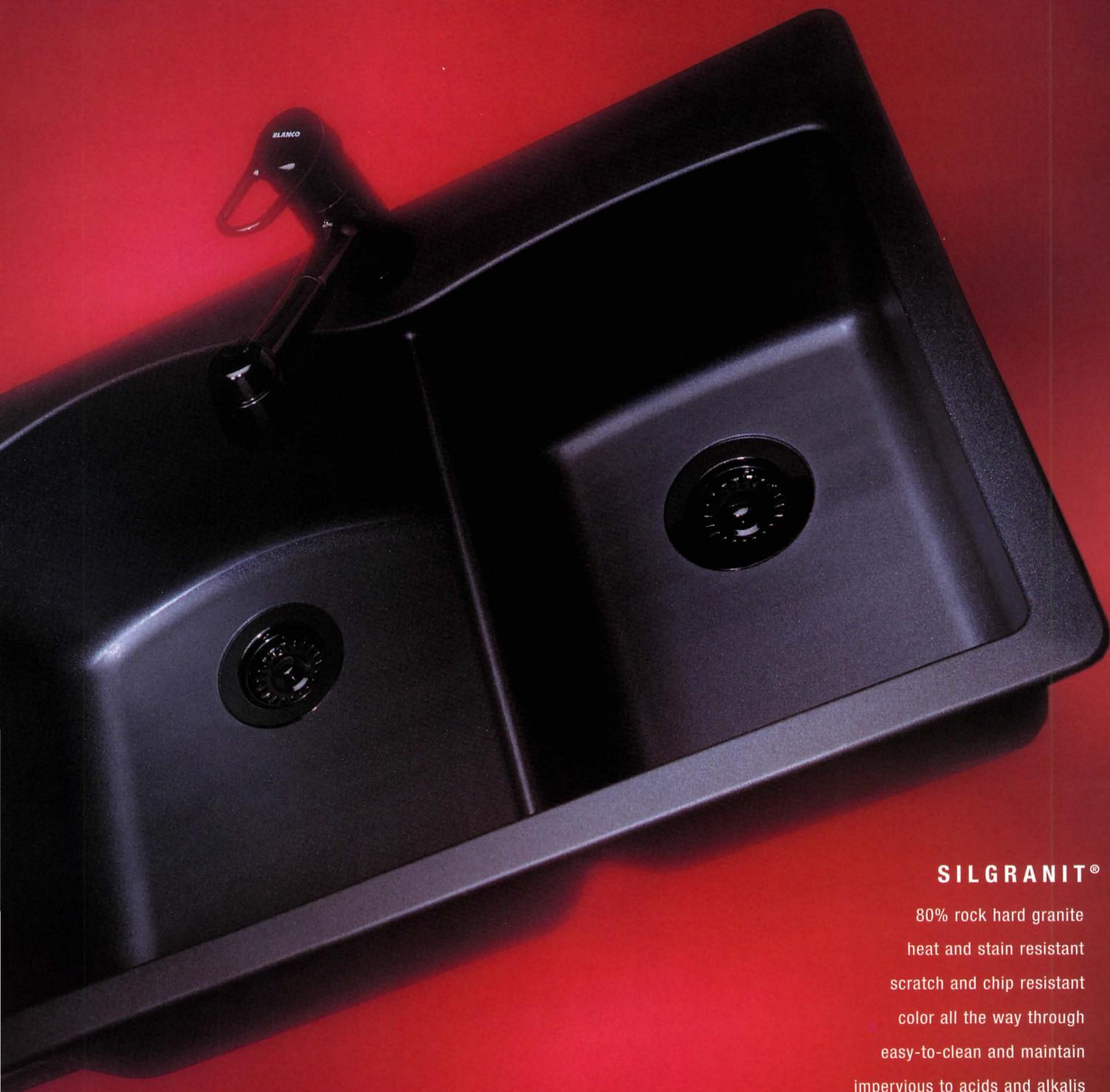
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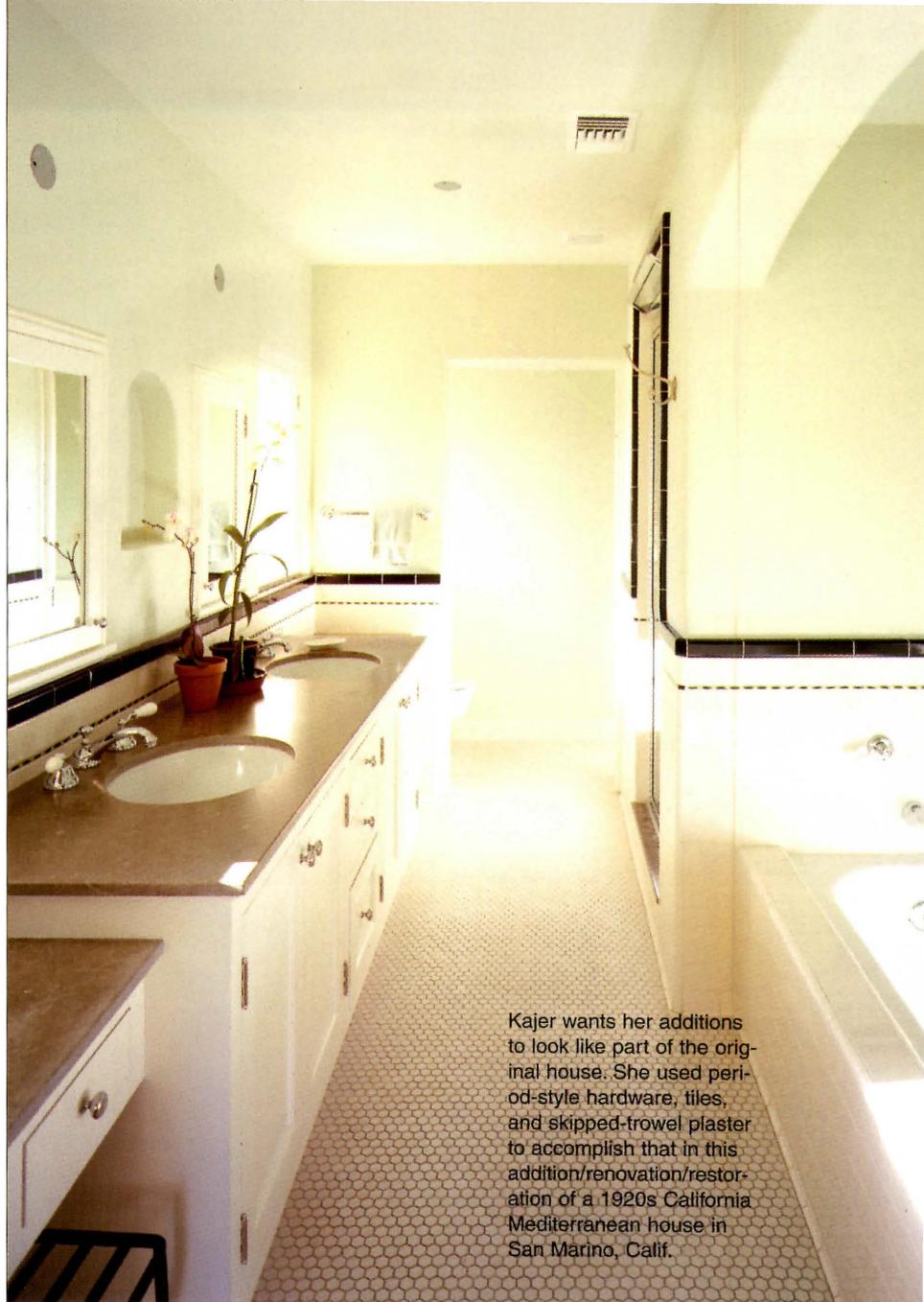


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Photos: Kajer by Mark Robert Halper; interiors © Eric Staudenmaier

kitchen chameleon



Kajer wants her additions to look like part of the original house. She used period-style hardware, tiles, and skipped-trowel plaster to accomplish that in this addition/renovation/restoration of a 1920s California Mediterranean house in San Marino, Calif.

georgie kajer's
kitchens and baths
stand out by blending in.

by meghan drueding

annual house tours run thick and deep in genteel Pasadena, Calif., home to a treasure trove of historic residences. But local architect Georgie Kajer, AIA, stopped going on them years ago. "I always ended up disappointed," she explains. "In so many of the remodels, the moment you walk in, you know something's been done to the original house. The thing that's interesting about old houses is their scale and proportion, and it's too sad to see that taken away."



Kajer loves old houses, and she loves her native Southern California. She's made a successful business out of those two passions, building a 12-year-old practice that specializes in sympathetic residential remodeling. Her work runs the gamut from light-filled ranch-house renovations to period restorations, with some new houses, private schools, and pro bono work sprinkled in. All of it navigates the tricky territory between deference to a vernacular style—usually California Mediterranean, Arts and Crafts, or Tudor Revival—and respect for her upscale clients' modern lifestyles.

learning the ropes

Kajer got an early education in the importance of a good floor plan growing up in a Garden Grove, Calif., ranch house. Philip Johnson's Crystal Cathedral sat right next door, but the ranch had more of an impact on her design sensibilities. "People sneer at them, but a good ranch house has a really livable floor plan," she says. At the age of 18, she knew she wanted to be an architect and entered school at Cal-Poly, Pomona. A year of study in Italy during college intensified a soft spot for the whitewashed, tile-

roofed Mediterranean house so popular in California during the 1920s and '30s. A job after college with Los Angeles architect William Pereira convinced Kajer that life at a large, corporate-style firm wasn't for her. And a year-and-a-half stint designing in Japan gave her insight into the sense of well-being that good architecture imparts. "I didn't leave Japan wanting to do 'Japanese architecture,'" she says. "But I learned a lot there about balancing spaces."

Back in the States, Kajer fed her interest in old houses by working for Pasadena-based restoration architect Tim Andersen. The West Hollywood, Calif., firm Serrurier Architects & Associates, which specializes in residential projects, was her last stop before going out on her own.

Like many architects with a hankering to open their own practice, Kajer didn't pay much attention to conventional wisdom. "I started my business at a terrible time, the recession of the early '90s," she says. "I was so lucky that friends were willing to hire me to do very small jobs for them, like laundry-room renovations. I did some really nice laundry rooms." Many of those friends worked at The Walt



Collaboration with other design professionals is a key part of Kajer's philosophy. She worked with interior designer Trish Boyer of Unruh Boyer in Los Angeles on this Glendale, Calif., ranch-house remodel.

The staff of Kajer Architects (from left): Tanya Cooper, Todd Curley, Scott Uriu, and Georgie Kajer. "I plan on keeping the office small," Kajer says. "It's more in line with my management style."



Disney Company's nearby animation studios, and they passed her name on to other friends in the entertainment and technology fields. When the later-1990s economic boom kicked in, Kajer found herself with a strong network of newly successful clients, many of whom hired her three or four times to remodel different parts of their houses.

place setting

As business grew, creating a sense of place remained a central goal of Kajer's practice. "I'm a regionalist," she says. "I believe in responding to climate with architecture." Though California Mediterranean is her hands-down favorite house style—"It's just so appropriate for the indoor-outdoor living opportunities that we have here; there are so many elements to play with"—she also enjoys climate-responsive work that's very different from her own. "Lake/Flato's work in Texas is very interesting to me," she says. "It's intellectually challenging, and it's of the place." She also appreciates the cool, fashion-shoot Modernism of Schindler and Neutra. Along with her husband, Eugene Sands, and their 1-year-old daughter, Mirjana, Kajer lives in a 1947, architect-designed ranch house with a rear terrace that functions nearly year-round as an outdoor living space.

Kajer describes her own work as self-effacing, and the same word could be used to describe her personality. It's won her fans in useful places—the world of general contractors, for instance. "Georgie doesn't have that 'stand aside, the architect is coming' mentality," says Tom Lake, a Pasadena builder who's worked with her for more than a decade. "There are lots of architects out there who want to create a new vocabulary," she says. "I'm not one of them. My goal is to make



Useful, attractive storage spaces, like the built-in in this master bath, abound in Kajer's designs. The kitchen (below left) of this 1920s Arts and Crafts addition/renovation in Pasadena, Calif., contains a casual breakfast nook (below right), something Kajer tries to include in every project.



Photos: Group photo by Mark Robert Halper; all others © Eric Staudenmaier

"the universe of design problems in residential work is not that big,

the real challenge is, how do you give an open-plan feel

to a house that never had it before?"—georgie kajer, architect



In this 1915 Arts and Crafts remodel in Pasadena, Kajer reconfigured the kitchen to admit extra daylight and balance out the dark woods appropriate to the style. The master bath is similarly detailed.

a seamless connection between an original house and its new parts.”

thoughtful spaces

While she clearly prizes the character and romance of early-20th-century homes, Kajer is no slave to tradition. During her 22 years as an architect she’s formulated some very definite ideas about adapting old houses to the way people live today. “The universe of design problems in residential work is not that big,” she says. “The real challenge is, how do you give an open-plan feel to a house that never had it before? How do you make a kitchen that used to be part of the servants’ quarters into one you can use for entertaining? How do you take a stiff, Arts and Crafts house and break it open while staying true to the architecture?”

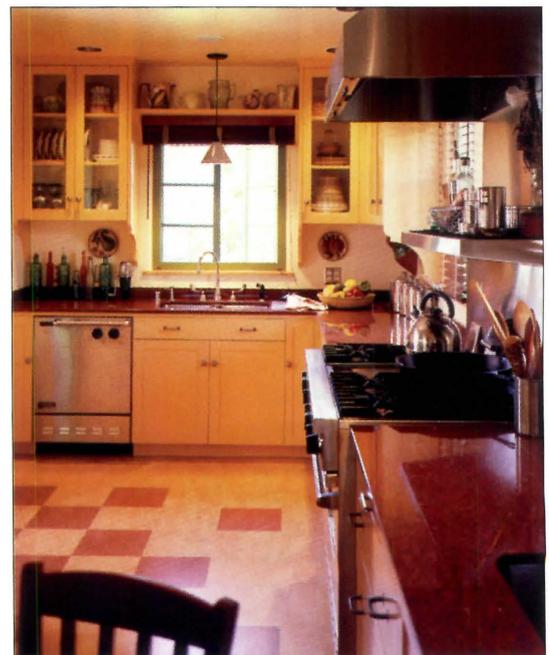
Formulating answers to these kinds of questions keeps Kajer’s design muscles strong. “I try to show clients three possible iterations of each space,” she says. “My job is to bring people options, and then guide them

through the selection process.” She’s a big proponent of open, informal floor plans, and she removes windowless hallways and rabbit-warren rooms with relish. Rather than adding on vertically, which California’s seismic codes make prohibitively expensive, she’ll either add on horizontally or reconfigure the existing house to find extra space the owners didn’t think they had. “It’s usually about flow and circulation,” she says.

Her clients agree. “I have small kids, and I wanted a family room just off the kitchen,” says Marie Queen, whose remodeled 1937 Monterey Colonial Revival home is a recent Kajer project. “The way she did it is fantastic. I can keep an eye on the kids easily, and it really keeps the integrity of the house.” Utilizing outdoor space is also a pet theme; nearly every remodel Kajer’s done ends up with an outdoor fireplace and extensive plantings, often designed in conjunction with a landscape architect.

Kitchens and baths are a main-

Kajer uses color to liven up small spaces. This kitchen in a 1920s California Mediterranean restoration in Glendale benefits from magnesite floor tiles, red granite counters, and bright-green window trim.



stay of her work, and it's here that her concern for function and form shines especially brightly. As a busy entrepreneur and new parent, Kajer obviously understands the value of extra storage space in hard-working areas of the house. Handy nooks and lots of built-ins characterize most of her kitchens and baths, no matter what the style. Durable, low-maintenance materials like soapstone and butcher block suit hectic lifestyles.

Most of the kitchens she's designed contain an island plus a separate, informal dining area or breakfast nook. "A lot of people think an island is fine for casual eating," she says, "but I think a table and chairs are much more comfortable." She's conscious that families tend to spend much of their quality time together in the kitchen, and allows enough space in between appliances so two people can prep or clean up at the same time. Even in these comparatively high-tech rooms, she makes the marriage of old and new work, using vintage tiles, hardware, and fixtures as counterparts to sparkling new appliances.

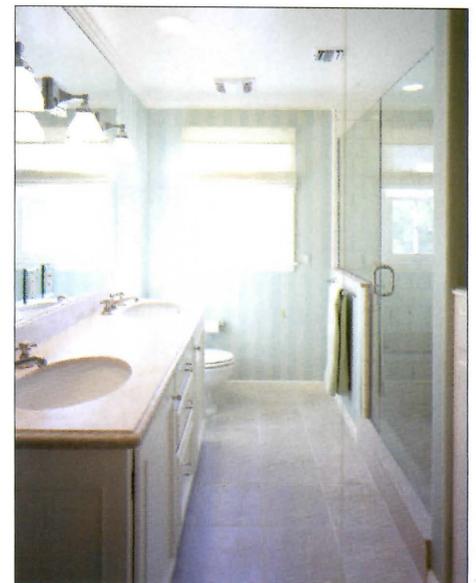
Owning a small business means that Kajer has to make careful choices about cash flow. She currently employs three designers, who act as project managers and handle CAD drafting. (She herself draws by hand.) And she invests in having her best projects shot by a professional architectural photographer.

"In many ways, this is still an old man's profession," Kajer says. "In cases where I'm finding it hard to be reckoned with as a woman, I'll take out my portfolio, and the problem goes away quickly."

Her work may not invent a new vocabulary, yet it speaks for itself beautifully. ra



The renovated kitchen in this Pasadena residence exemplifies Kajer's approach to her clients' relaxed but busy lifestyles. It's large enough for entertaining but also highly functional, with an island prep sink and a commercial-style range. Elsewhere in the house, she added a simple, light-filled bath (below right).

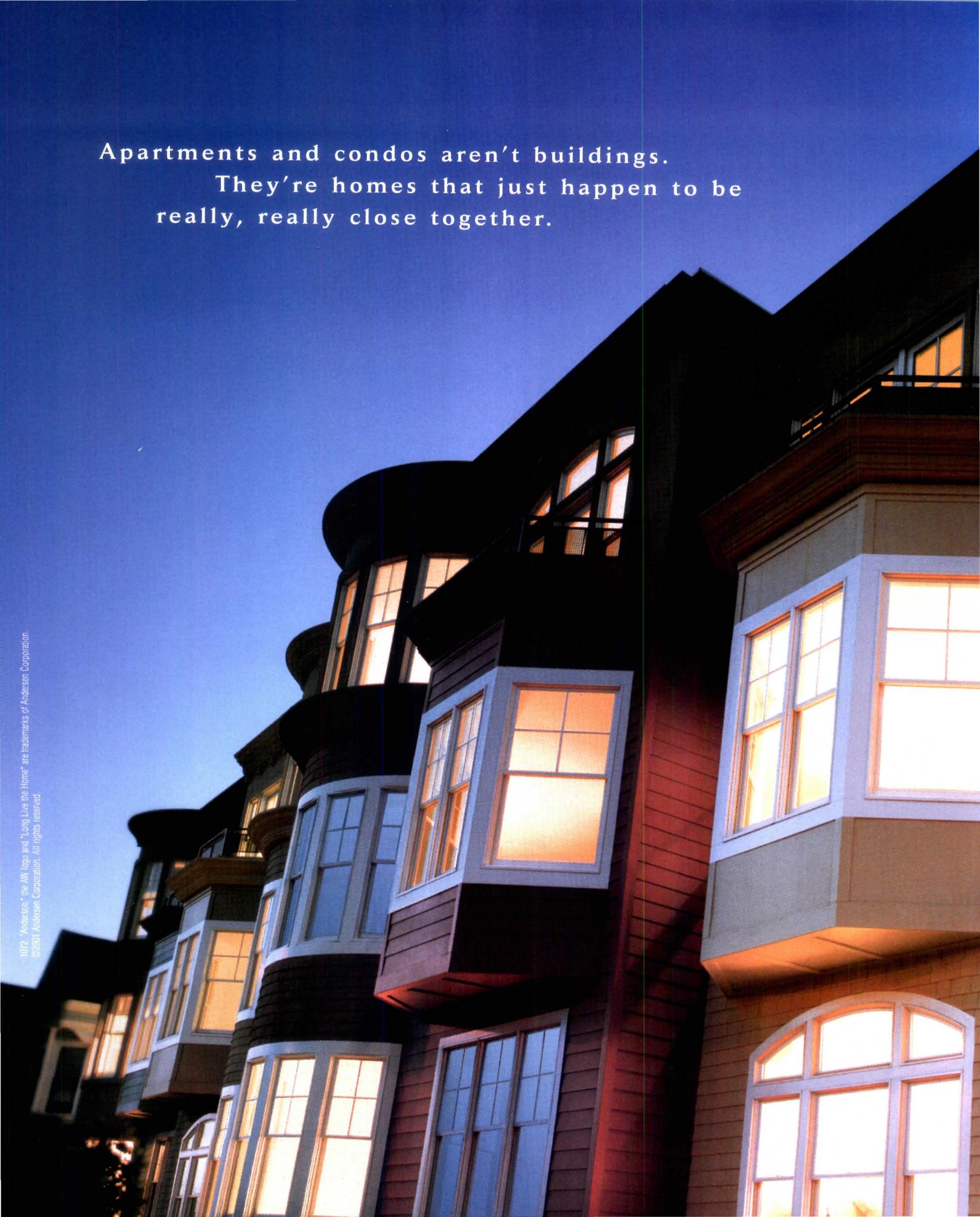


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"georgie doesn't have that 'stand aside,

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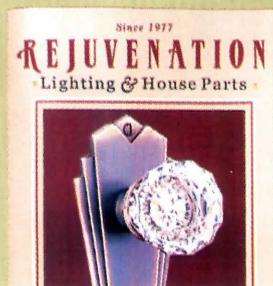
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rescue missions

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by meghan drueding
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multiple personalities

Judith Thompson had already hired and dismissed two architects when she called on Lester Tom and Fu-Tung Cheng to design the renovation of her home in Tiburon, Calif. Thompson, the head of a high-end residential construction company based in San Francisco, realizes the irony of the situation. "This is what I do for a living, but when it comes to my own house, I go through four different people," she says. "Everybody laughs at me."

Until they see the house, that is. A Modern, open-plan rebuild of a 1950s ranch, it combines luxurious materials and a serene, confident design with an earthiness that's pure Northern California. "Because of my business, many people from the design and construction industries have been to the

This Tiburon, Calif., remodel enjoys improved traffic flow with its open floor plan. The breakfast nook, for example, functions as an extension of the kitchen rather than as an entirely separate room.

rescue missions

house,” says Thompson. “I can’t tell you how many of them have said it’s the most comfortable home they’ve ever seen.”

The road to such success wasn’t always smooth. Thompson and her partner, Cindy Brooks, didn’t intend initially to tear down the entire house. They worked with the first two architects to come up with a layout that kept mostly to the original footprint, with a few modifications. Tom, who had worked on projects with Thompson’s company before, came on board to “clean up” the plan, as he puts it, and demolition began. “Once demolition started, we saw that everything was such a mess, it would be better to just tear the whole thing down,” Thompson says.

communication major

Then Thompson and Brooks called Cheng, a Berkeley designer whose work they’d admired in magazines. “They came to us at first to do the interiors,” says Cheng. “Then, we tweaked the window design a little bit, gave advice on the hardscaping, designed the eaves and the exterior siding. We sort of inched our way into this project.” Tom took care of much of the exterior detailing and designed a second-story bedroom addition above the garage. While this two-cooks-in-the-kitchen approach might not appeal to everyone, Tom and Cheng made it work. “We coordinated with each other, making



Judith Thompson

sure they were on board with our drawings and vice versa,” says Cheng. “We understood them and they us, and it worked out very well.”

To make things more complicated, Cheng’s arrival on the scene didn’t occur until demolition was three-quarters complete. The contractors (Thompson Brooks, Inc., of course) needed drawings, and they needed them quickly. “They were already doing framing and wiring, and in many cases we had to decide immediately where the appliances would be going,” says Cheng. “We were on a tight, tight time schedule.” Weekly meetings on the jobsite with the clients and the building staff helped keep the flow of information moving steadily between all the involved parties.

kitchen connection

Cheng’s design/build firm, Cheng Design, has a number of whole-house projects under its belt. But kitchens and baths form the backbone of its portfolio. Thompson and Brooks’ house, with its six baths and expansive kitchen, showcases the kind of inventive approach for which the firm is known. The kitchen layout encompasses several different zones,

A rich blend of materials—crackle-glazed backsplash tile, a hand-troweled plaster arc, hemlock pantry cabinets, and a site-cast concrete pony wall—warms the glossy new kitchen.

project:

Thompson Brooks residence, Tiburon, Calif.

architect of record:

Avila/Tom, Oakland, Calif.

designer:

Cheng Design, Berkeley, Calif.

general contractor:

Thompson Brooks, Inc., San Francisco

interior designer:

Lookout Design, San Francisco

project size before renovation:

3,333 square feet

project size after renovation:

6,000 square feet

construction cost:

Withheld



© Matthew Millman

In the California Modern tradition, plenty of operable glass windows and doors let the front (above) and rear of the house open to the outdoors.



© Matthew Millman

rescue missions

delineated by the placement of a large, L-shaped island. One arm of the “L” contains a vegetable sink, a butcher-block chopping counter, and a raised shelf for extra counter space. It faces a wall of stainless steel appliances that would please a four-star chef, thus creating the room’s cooking zone.

The island’s other arm, a poured-in-place concrete pony wall with a maple counter, serves as the social section of the kitchen, a place to lounge and snack. A pantry at the east end of the room is partially obscured by a set of built-in hemlock cabinets, and a mudroom opposite it provides another spot to store odds and ends. A breakfast nook with built-in seating—a holdover from one of the first sets of drawings for the project—gives the clients a sunny eating area. It’s more casual than their loftlike dining/living room space, which is separated from the kitchen and adjoining family room by a set of folding doors.

to be continued

The island has a third countertop in addition to the butcher-block and maple surfaces. It’s made of custom-cast Geocrete, a concrete product developed and patented by Cheng Design’s sister company, Cheng Products. To establish a sense of continuity, Cheng also specified Geocrete for several bathroom counters. Likewise, panels of corrugated aluminum fused between translucent fiberglass sheets appear on some of the kitchen cabinets as well as in the master bath.

Floor materials reinforce the feeling of consistency. Cheng used a mix of concrete and bamboo floors for the kitchen, then extended the bamboo into the other first-floor rooms. “It’s about lacing different spaces together,” he says. “The rooms sort of bleed into one another.” Slate tiles cover most of the bathroom floors; as in the master bedroom, part of the master bath’s floor consists of mahogany planks. An underfoot mosaic of irregularly shaped flagstones helps differentiate this bath from others in the house.

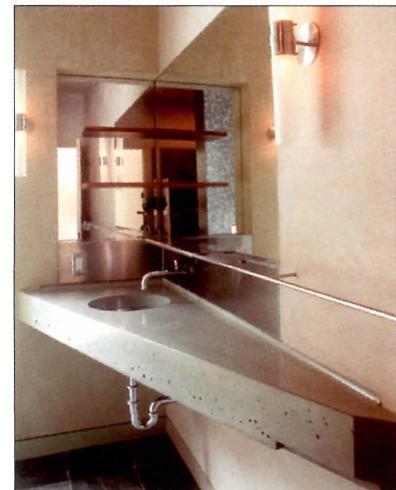
For all the confusion the project’s col-



Cheng Design used similar elements in each of the home’s six bathrooms to help unify the project. Those elements include slate tiles and sleek light fixtures (above and below).

© Matthew Millman

laborative nature entailed, the main players walked away happy. “It was an interesting mix of people—you don’t usually hear of a contractor hiring a design/build firm to work with an architect,” says Cheng. Thompson, who studied architecture before getting into the construction side of the business, learned the importance of hiring people she trusted so she didn’t have to micromanage the job. For Tom, the total of talents each team member brought to the table outweighed the logistical hassles. “We could not have done the concrete floors and walls that Fu-Tung did, for example, because we just don’t have the experience,” he says. “Collaborating can produce a great end result.”—*m.d.*



Fu-Tung Cheng



A guest bath's sea-green tile, stainless steel soaking tub, and combination of natural and artificial light create an atmosphere of serenity.

rescue missions

open sesame

Located in a historic “dollar-house” neighborhood in downtown Baltimore, this row house was worth every penny of its purchase price back in the urban-blighted '70s. Unfortunately, money spent on “remuddling” it subsequently was not so wisely parted with. So when architect Rebecca Swanston’s client bought the house (at new-millennium prices), he knew immediately he had to renovate—this time, properly.

out of the dark

The client, who loves to throw parties, was especially anxious to enlarge and update the tight, inefficient kitchen. He didn’t talk about natural light, Swanston says, but it became obvious to her that the gloom made the kitchen live even smaller than its skimpy size. The light-blocking culprit was a masonry wall, part of a failed passive solar system installed at the height of the energy crisis. The owners at the time built a south-facing wall of glass and dropped in the stone wall 6 feet behind it to collect what solar heat they could.

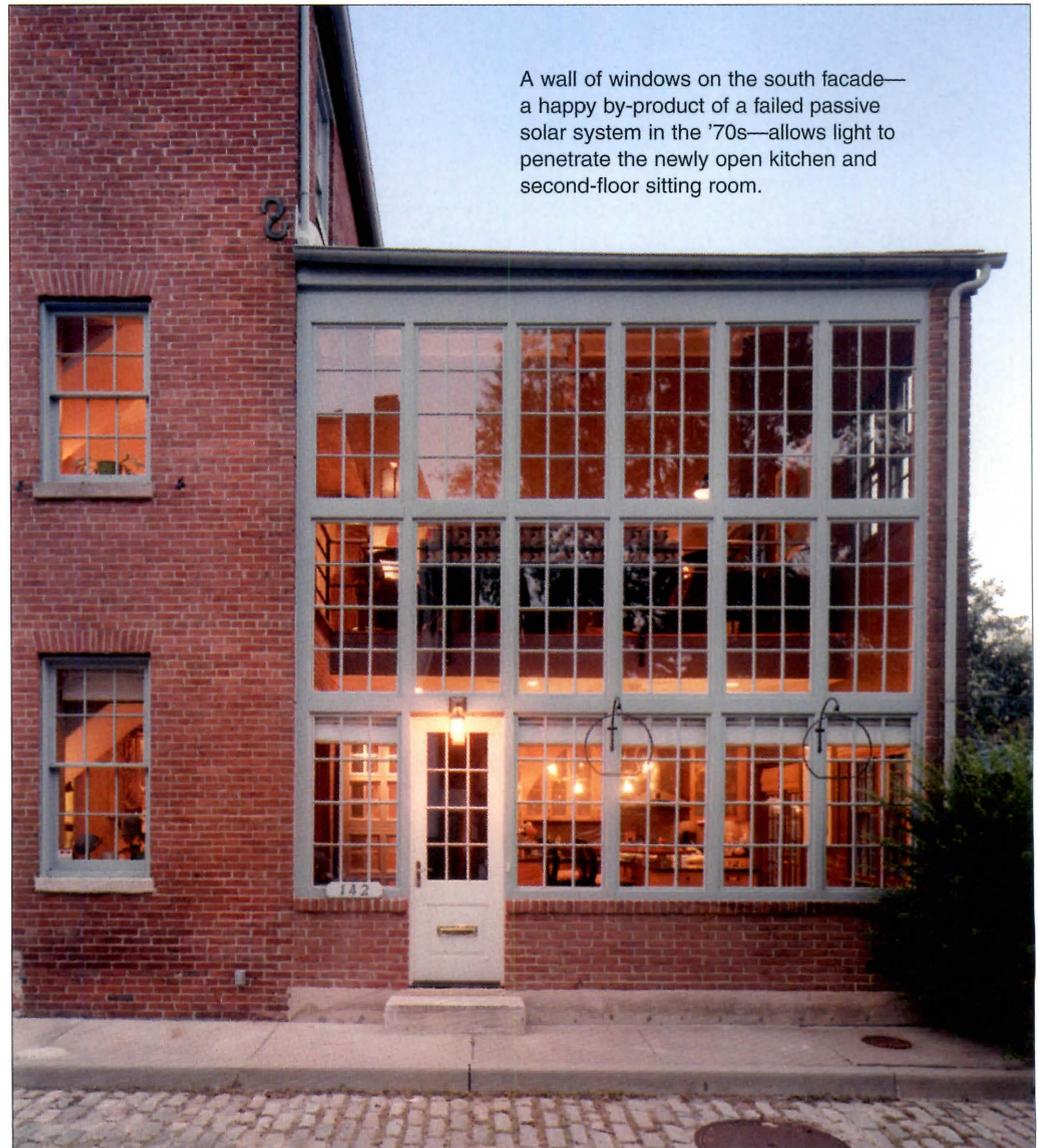
Swanston’s challenge was to bring the dark space into the 21st century for her young, active client. “He wanted a kitchen that was more open and had a better relationship to the house,” says the principal of Baltimore-based Swanston & Associates, a firm that specializes in urban miracles.

To accomplish this time travel, she first removed the misguided masonry wall. “Taking the wall down opened the area that became the kitchen,” she says. It created a sight line to the dining room and, because a second-floor setback already existed, Swanston was able to open the kitchen to the second floor, for a volumi-



Photos: Bill Lyons Photography

For this Baltimore row-house redo, architect Rebecca Swanston removed a masonry wall to open a narrow, cramped kitchen. Durable yet luxurious materials, like stainless steel, granite, slate, and cherry-stained maple, dress up the new space.



A wall of windows on the south facade—a happy by-product of a failed passive solar system in the '70s—allows light to penetrate the newly open kitchen and second-floor sitting room.



nous two-story space in some areas.

The client had a good eye for design, says the architect, and possessed an intrepid desire for color. Thus, a cherry-stained maple dining counter is the focal point of the kitchen. Around it, Swanston and the client chose durable yet luxurious materials, like slate tiles, granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, and glass-front maple cabinets.

master plan

Though the client had specific requests for the kitchen, he left the bathrooms' design entirely in Swanston's hands. The second floor originally contained two back-to-back bathrooms that failed to exploit the southern exposure, and the third floor had two rooms but no bathrooms. The architect kept one bath on the second floor, but she shifted it west to free up room for a new sitting room. The whole third floor she dedicated to a master bedroom suite.

"We took out the walls dividing the two rooms, opening it up to a master bedroom suite, and created a cubelike bathroom that

floats in the space," she says.

Much like the kitchen, the master bath is bright and unfettered, thanks to sandblasted glass doors that allow natural light to penetrate. The shower is undefined, marked only by a drain in the slate-tile floor.

"It was our recommendation to do it this way," Swanston says. "The bathroom has a lower ceiling, so it was a big risk to take. In some ways, it's very cavelike, but it works very well and the client loves it."—*n.f.m.*

project:

Harris residence, Baltimore

architect:

Swanston & Associates, Baltimore

general contractor:

Roy Cox Remodeling, Baltimore

project size before remodeling:

1,800 square feet

project size after remodeling:

1,800 square feet

construction cost:

Withheld



The master bath is expressed as a separate, low-ceilinged volume tucked inside the bedroom (above). Vertical cabinets and a floor drain are the only defining elements in the open shower (top).

damage undone

Although the building boom of the past two decades captures all the media attention these days, we're also more quietly contending with the results of earlier ones. So many undistinguished houses of the '50s, '60s, and '70s tarnish the beautiful sites they occupy. So much ill-advised home building to be undone and redone. Such was the case with this house in Kirkland, Wash. It was a classic example of wasted potential, until the current owners came along—and hired architect Ben Trogon.

Trogon's biggest challenge was deciding where to begin. Ultimately, he chose to start with the view. It's a panoramic one—of Lake Washington, the Seattle skyline, and the Olympic Mountains. Other priorities for the homeowners were a more spacious and efficient kitchen, more natural light, and a better connection with the outdoors.

"It was a brick-veneer, one-story home with a simple layout," says the principal



A trellis-topped terrace extends the interiors of this Kirkland, Wash., home to the great outdoors.



Photos: ©Steve Keating Photography

of Ben Trogon Architects in Seattle. "The kitchen was remotely located in its own room, so you needed to walk through a 3-foot-wide doorway from the living/dining room. There was no visual or spatial connection."

high drama

The clients, two Microsoft employees, cook, entertain often, and plan to start a family, so a beautiful, serviceable kitchen was a must. Keeping the northern exterior walls, Trogon orchestrated a massive overhaul and expansion that projected east, west, and south. "There is nothing at all left of the existing kitchen or bath," he says. "What we did was pretty dramatic."

Trogon and his team completely reworked the interior and pushed the kitchen to the south, which linked it to a terrace. "There's a window that looks right out onto the terrace, so if you wanted to serve something through the windows, you could," the architect says.

The former kitchen became the new dining room, which has direct visual and physical access to the new kitchen and living room. Because the new kitchen's



Ben Trogon kept a simple palette of materials for a consistent interior scheme. He used Douglas fir cabinets, slate counters with a stainless steel band, and stainless steel appliances (above); the floor throughout is a grainy maple for added texture.

Trogdon designed an open living/dining area that has a visual and physical link to the adjacent kitchen and terrace. The new plan invites entertaining.



rescue missions

materials had to relate to adjacent spaces, selections were especially important. “We were looking for continuity,” Trogdon says. “We wanted to feel like the kitchen was an extension of the main living space. We didn’t want to create something that was autonomous or separate.” He’d used Douglas fir laminated beams and posts throughout the house, so he carried that over to the kitchen cabinetry. He speced slate tiles with a stainless steel band for the countertop; for the floor, he chose a grainy Number 3 maple to give the expansive space some added texture.

open-ended

For the master bath, the clients wanted a shower with locker-room functionality. “They asked for something spacious and comfortable with lots of light,” says Trogdon. Thus, a freestanding tiled wall with a frosted-glass partition defines the doorless shower, leaving everything completely open all the way to the roof timbers. “We went to great lengths to design the roof so that it looks as if it were dropped down over the volume,” Trogdon says. A string of south-facing clerestory windows filters in natural light, and a slate floor and ceramic tiles tie the space together.

The architect also remodeled up, adding a second level that contains three bedrooms and two full baths. The finished project nearly doubled the size of the original, but the improvement is incalculable. The clients now have a home that suits their lot and their lifestyle, and gives them the elbow room they need for the future.—*n.f.m.*

project:

Weed/Pappalardo residence, Kirkland, Wash.

architect:

Ben Trogdon Architects, Seattle

general contractor:

Truppi’s Finer Homes, Seattle

project size before remodeling:

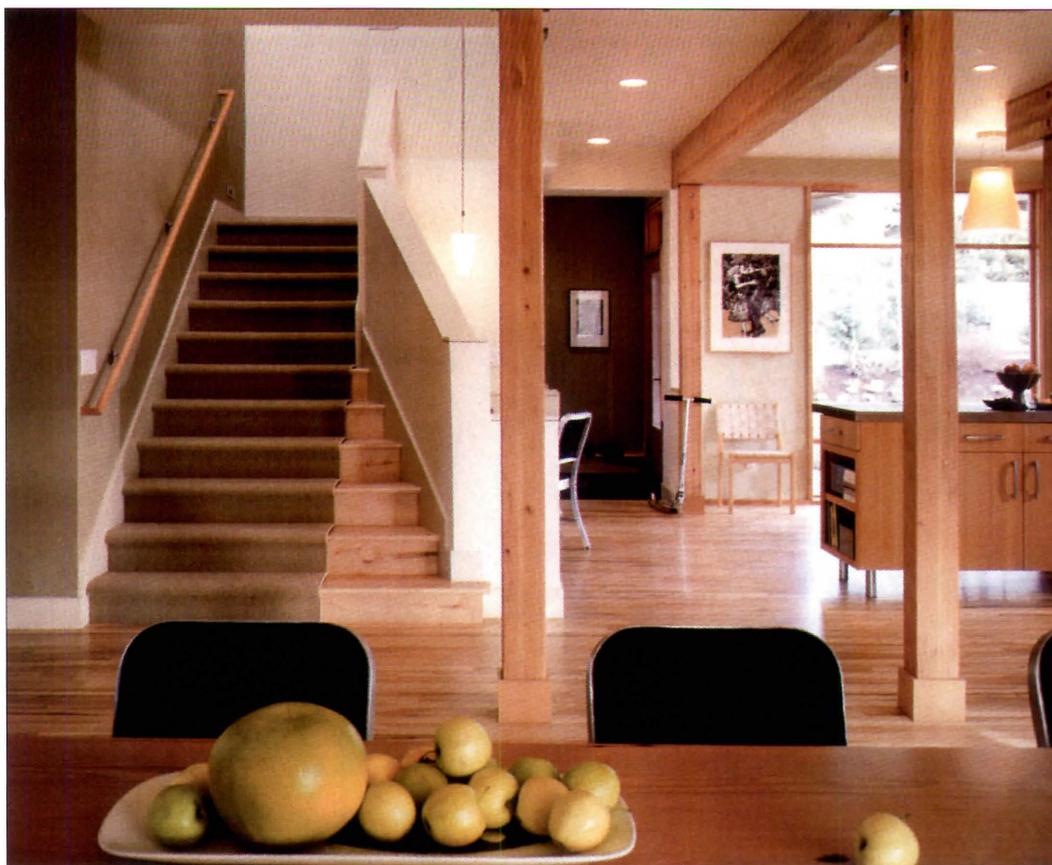
2,650 square feet

project size after remodeling:

4,965 square feet

construction cost:

\$120 per square foot



Photos: ©Steve Keating Photos



Exposed Doug fir glu-lams, millwork, and casework add warmth to the interiors (above and below) and serve to convey Pacific Northwest building traditions.

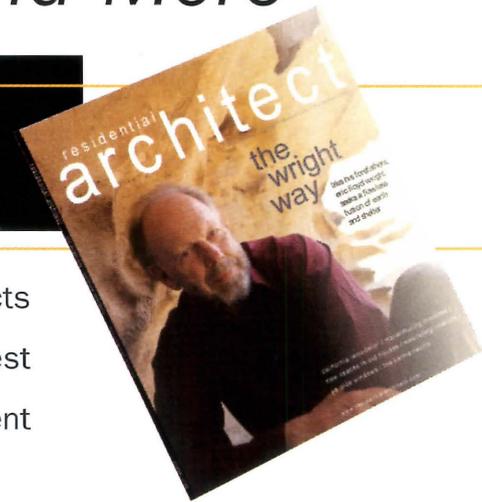


With a shower that is open to the roof beams, the master bath feels like a locker room. Clerestory windows and glass openings contribute to the airy feel.

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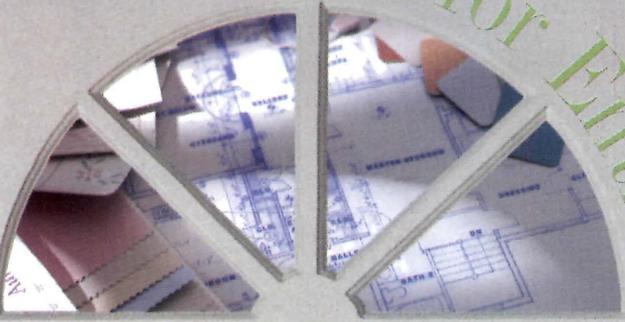
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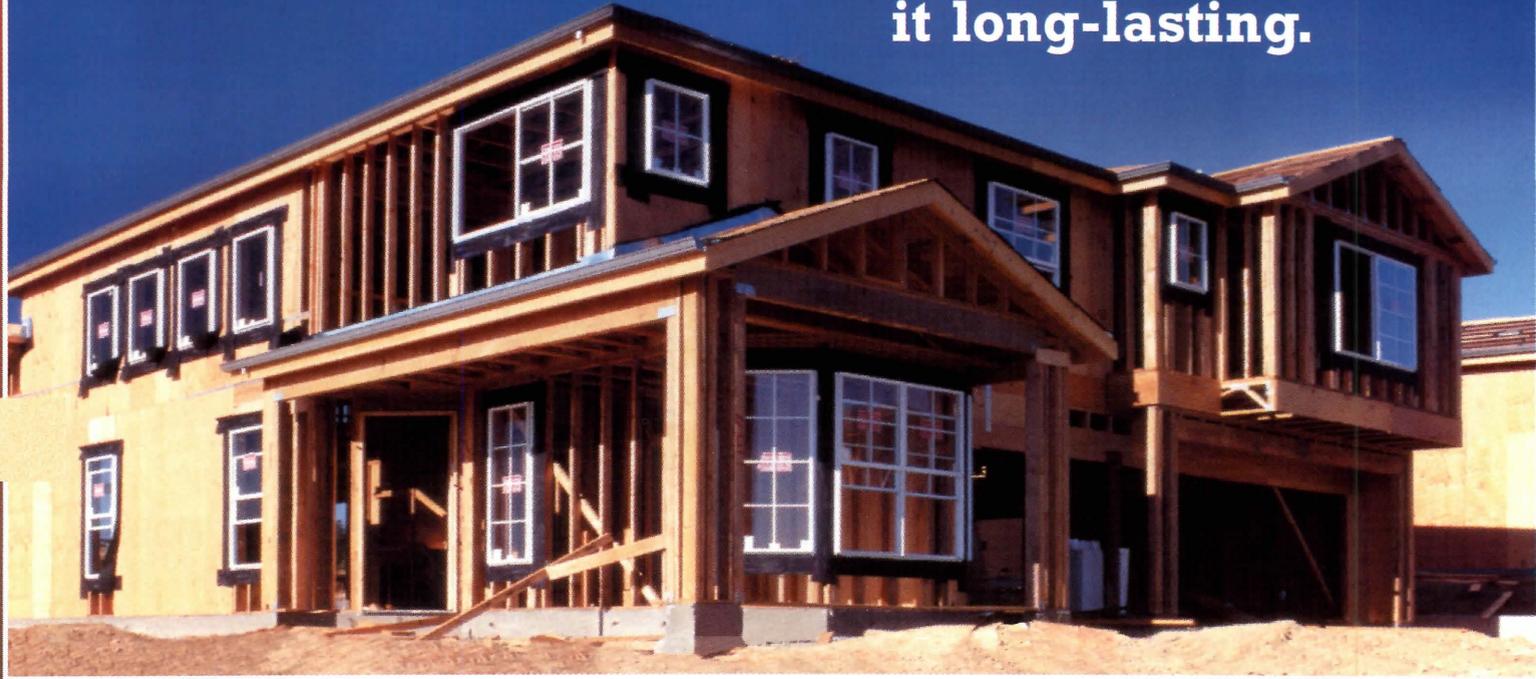
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hands off

is an electronic faucet the right touch for your next project?

by nigel f. maynard

Anyone who's used an airport rest room is familiar with electronic faucets. The units have a Jetson-Family flair that makes perfect sense in public facilities—especially sleek airport terminals. But wouldn't it be interesting if you could spec them in your houses? Well, now you can—in more styles and finishes than you can shake a wet hand at.

E-faucets have many benefits that manufacturers claim transfer to the residential powder room or master bath. "The features that electronic faucets offer make them a great choice for the home," says Keith Moore, product manager at Norcross, Ga.-based KWC Faucets. "We sell quite a few for residential use. They are becoming popular."

Stan Nickell, product manager at Grohe America



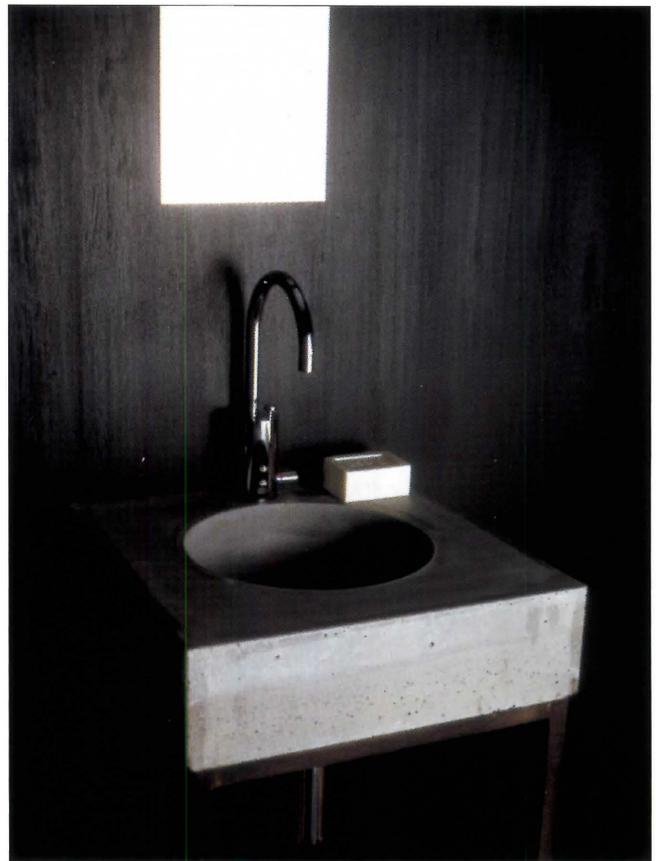
Grohe's Europlus E has an all-brass body and a battery life of three and a half years.

in Bloomingdale, Ill., says e-faucets save as much as 75 percent more water than conventional units, but, he adds, for many homeowners improved hygiene is the most important plus. "For those of us who have children, it's very nice to put one in the powder room or bathroom," he says. "The kids don't have to touch anything when they wash their hands."

Because e-faucets are easy to operate and are ADA-compliant, they're a godsend for physically impaired homeowners. Many of the electronic faucets that Michigan City, Ind., manufacturer Geberit sells for residential applications are for wheelchair users, says product manager Gene Carpenter. The product is useful too for aging homeowners as their dexterity diminishes. With more Americans choosing to age in place, the application is bound to increase in new construction and in remodeled homes, he adds.

beyond utility

Despite their futuristic functionality, many hands-free faucets are stuck with Flintstone-Family, stone-age aesthetics. Most units are crude and cumbersome-looking, designed more for the durability issues that



Sleek and stylish eMOTE uses a sensor to control water flow, but it will cost you \$1,400.

concern commercial clients. Fortunately, some manufacturers have begun to infuse a little style in their models, with an eye toward capturing residential market share. Some are even designing e-faucets dedicated to home use.

One such product is eMOTE, by Dornbracht USA in Duluth, Ga. "What we saw on the market seemed a little too commercial," says Jon Spector, director of U.S. operations. "Because of their commercial nature, the faucets are

designed to withstand abuse. Unfortunately, in order to achieve that quality, they look very heavy and industrial."

eMOTE's lines are more gracefully formed than commercial specs, but without sacrificing function. The faucet operates in an automatic mode that engages when hands are placed under the tap, and it can be set manually to control how long the water remains running. Available in polished chrome and

continued on page 74

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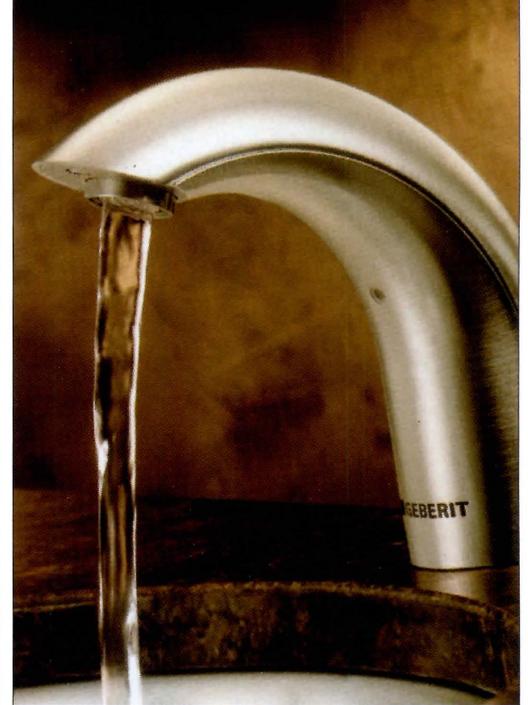
matte platinum finishes, eMOTE uses a commonly available nickel cadmium battery that lasts for five years and is accessible from under the basin. The faucet is available as a wall- or deck-mount unit.

Another new and stylish offering is e-Flow, from Indianapolis-based Delta. Also designed for the home, e-Flow operates with a 30-second maximum run time that resets when users remove their hands. The faucet's four AA batteries can run for 150,000 cycles, or about a year, and a low-battery light activates when 3,000 uses remain. E-Flow is available in six colors and in a chrome or pearl nickel finish.

KWC's Tronic faucet, designed for the commercial market, can be pre-set to maintain a particular water temperature, and can be either hardwired or battery-operated. The battery supplies enough juice for approximately 170 cycles a day for four years, the manufacturer says. Made from cast brass, the unit comes in chrome, white, polished brass, and polished nickel.

Grohe's Europlus E electronic faucet uses a six-volt lithium battery that lasts an estimated three and a half years and can be changed from above the counter. Available in polished brass or polished chrome, the faucet comes either without a temperature-control lever, with a visible lever, or with an internal control.

Today's e-faucets offer versatility: Tronic (near right) has pre-adjusted temperature settings; Geberit's (far right) components are housed above counter; and e-Flow (below) has interchangeable handle colors.



Geberit makes two types of electronic faucets, one with an internal, pre-set temperature control and one with an external control. The units' six-volt lithium batteries provide 200,000 uses before needing replacement, the manufacturer says. Finishes include chrome, tarnish-resistant (PVD) brass, polished nickel, brushed nickel, satin chrome, and a two-tone, chrome-and-PVD brass.

several considerations

So many choices. But is one of these spigots really appropriate for the home, especially when the client has no physical disability? Architect Stephen Atkinson thinks they are, though he does have a reservation.

"My concern is with the serviceability," says the principal of Studio Atkinson in New York City. "How many times have they not worked in the airport?"

KWC's Keith Moore concedes that electronic faucets

are more complicated than their "analog" counterparts, so they might be considered more difficult to repair. "But they can be repaired," he says. "Any plumber can handle it with our assistance. And you don't have to be an electrician."

Architect Peter Gilbert believes e-faucets are A-OK for residential applications, but he points out several considerations. "Design consistency would be the significant thing for me, unless I had a client who really wanted a specific faucet," says the principal of Peter David Gilbert Architects in Oakland, Calif. He thinks the products should be limited to a prep sink or bar sink, rather than a bathroom, and adds that the units should match the non-e-faucets in the home to avoid looking conspicuous.

An electronic faucet might also be prohibitively expensive for some clients, says Gilbert. For example, Grohe's Europlus E costs around \$400, Delta's e-Flow goes for \$410, Geber-

it starts at about \$460, a KWC Tronic ranges from \$600 to \$800, and eMOTE tips the scales at a whopping \$1,400 and up. "You are not going to find many people opting for one unless it's appropriately priced," Gilbert says.

Adolfo Perez sees things differently. In his view, it's neither a cost issue nor a technical issue. "It just strikes me as more technology than you need in the average home," says the Newton, Mass.-based architect. "The kinds of considerations that make them appropriate for institutional work are not the same for residential."

Au contraire, says Atkinson, who likens e-faucets to commercial-style residential kitchens. "As people's incomes go up, the things they can buy start to move toward things like industrial cooking appliances," he says. "It's one of those things you don't really need, but because people are doing it, it becomes an end in and of itself." ra

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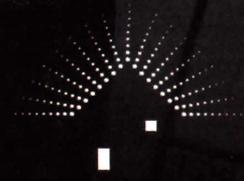


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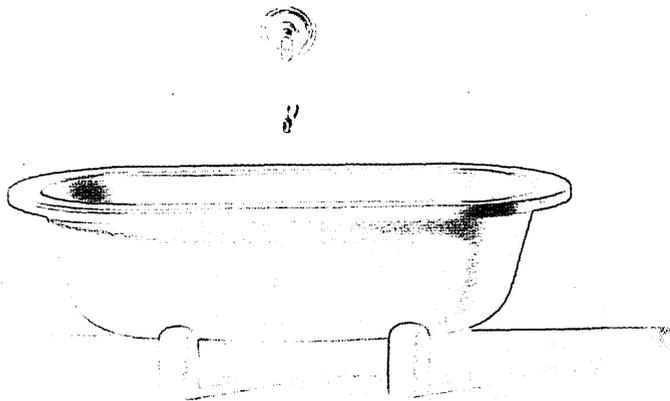
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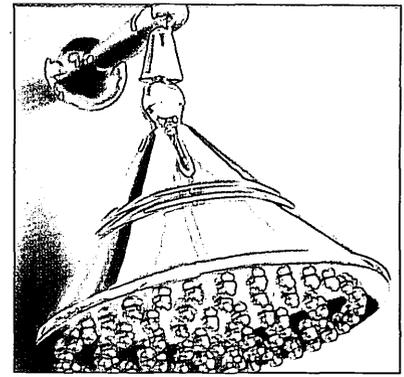


key lagaro

“We are finding that architects are specifying simple geometry when it comes to soaking tubs,” says Gary Uhl, director of design for Piscataway, N.J.-based American Standard. The Lagaro is a pared-down modern version of the old claw-foot number. Made from molded acrylic, it offers the strength of cast iron but has a softer look and a warmer feel, Uhl says. The tub, which measures 67 by 31¼ by 21⅝ inches, sits on substantial cylindrical feet. The interior is available in white or with a stainless steel look; the exterior is cream to facilitate customization. Porcher by American Standard, 732.980.3000; www.americanstandard-us.com.

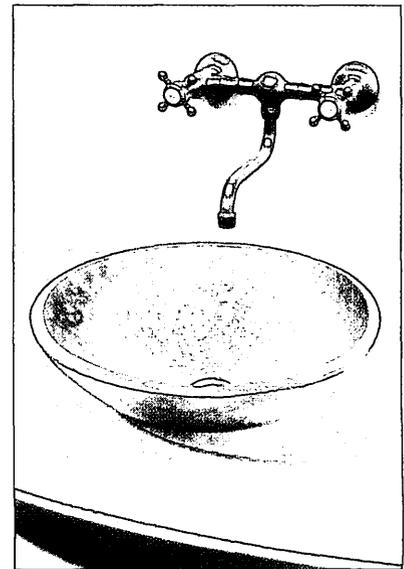
above grade

Most above-counter sinks are either vitreous china, glass, or stone; this one by Costa Mesa, Calif.-based Rohl is hand-cast from solid aluminum. “It was an opportunity to do something different,” says marketing director Greg Rohl, who says the basin is a little more modern than the company’s traditional offerings. The aluminum “also allows us to do a lot more finishes and textures.” Designed by artist Jon Grauman, who specializes in three-dimensional work, the bowl measures 16¼ inches across and 5½ inches deep. It’s available in copper or polished aluminum and a full range of anodized, powder-coated, and custom finishes. Rohl, 714.557.1933; www.rohlhome.com.



period picots

This new, Victorian-style, 9-inch showerhead from Allendale, N.J.-based Harrington Brass Works complements the company’s other traditional-style offerings, but with a bit more cutting-edge flair, says Dick Isaacs, national sales and marketing manager. The showerhead features 76 picots, which generate a heavier jet of water, Isaacs says, and is designed for overhead or side-arm installation. It comes in polished and satin nickel, chrome, tarnish-free brass, and custom finishes. Harrington Brass Works, 201.818.1300; www.harringtonbrassworks.com.



—nigel f. maynard

Landscape created by nature.

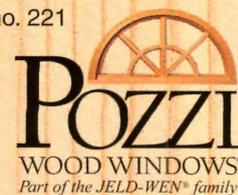
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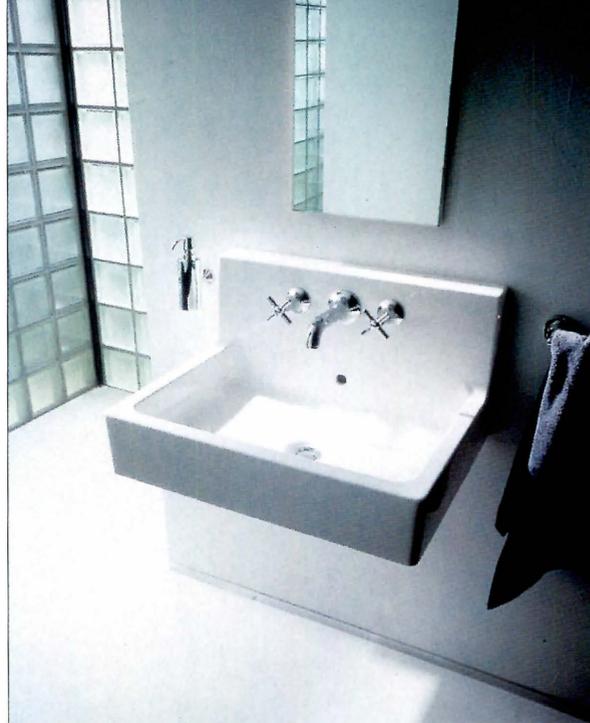
drop by drop

Evoking elongated water droplets, the Roy Collection's chrome-plated brass accessories include subtle accents of true satin crystal. The collection includes towel rails and rings, a shelf, hooks, soap holders, a tumbler holder, a toilet-tissue roll, and a toilet-brush holder. Valli & Valli, 877.326.2565; www.vallievalli.com.



ultra cool

With looks from the funky '50s and technology from today's energy-conscious era, the Northstar fridge brightens any kitchen with its eight hip color options or unlimited custom hues. The 18-cubic-foot bottom-mount unit stands 70 inches tall and 31 inches wide. Injected foam insulation provides high efficiency, and the lining and refrigerant are CFC-free. Elmira Stove Works, 800.295.8498; www.elmirastoveworks.com.



square deal

The Vero washbasin's sleek geometric design echoes the rectangular shapes found in many bathrooms. The sink can be mounted on the wall, set into a countertop, or combined with a standing chrome frame. Options include an integrated backsplash and a WonderGliss surface finish, which is designed to repel dirt and water deposits. Ideal for tight spaces or universal access, models range from 15 to 18½ inches deep and are 23½ inches wide. Duravit, 212.947.4557; www.duravit.com.

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weld done

Square, 16-gauge stainless steel tubing frames these sophisticated kitchen cabinets by Diamond Spas. The hand-welded counter with bowed-front farm sink comes in stainless steel or copper. The cabinet unit stands 4 inches above the floor for easy cleaning, and the doors can be constructed of walnut, as shown, or a variety of other woods, copper, or stainless steel. Custom-created cabinets are also available. Diamond Spas, 800.951.SPAS; www.diamondspas.com.



catching z's

Open arches, squiggles, contemporary bars, and dotted patterns mark the new Essential'Z collection of cabinet pulls. Offered in satin chrome and weathered nickel finishes, the pulls range in size from 3 to 5 inches. Selected designs are also available in a dark wrought-iron finish. Amerock, 815.969.6308; www.amerock.com.

stairway to heaven

Part of the Neo-Metro Collection, the Soho soaking tub features a whopping 150-gallon capacity and contoured stairs for serious bathers. The 14-gauge stainless steel tank boasts double-wall insulation, a built-in seat, and a seamless floor. Acorn Engineering, 800.591.9050; www.neo-metro.com.



—shelley d. hutchins

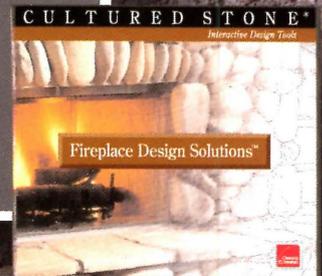
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LBL Lighting offers an extensive line of modern and classical fixtures, ranging from pendants and wall sconces to exterior pieces. "LBL's line of fixtures is one we go back to a lot," says Sours. "It offers a wide range of styles, high quality, and a good price point." The Tropez pendant shown here measures 10 inches long and features mouth-blown Murano glass. LBL Lighting, 708.755.2100; www.lblighting.com.



cynthia sours and john n. white

*inox design
avondale estates, ga.*



bronze age

Inox Design favors Newport Brass faucets because the company offers more than 30 colors and finishes, including weathered copper, satin nickel, and antique brass. "We really like the look of the wall-mount faucets, in particular," Sours says, praising the manufacturer's sleek, modern aesthetic. This faucet in oil-rubbed bronze, from the 2100 Series, features handles by French manufacturer Bouvet. Newport Brass, 949.223.1088.

cliff hanger

Arbor Cliff cabinets by KraftMaid are made of MDF or optional all-birch plywood. Drawers are $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick and feature dovetail construction. Doors and drawer fronts come in oak, hickory, birch, pine, cherry, maple, and poplar. "Arbor Cliff is a good line because they offer a lot of styles, nice finishes, and lots of options," Sours says. "Overall, it's a good product for the money." Arbor Cliff by KraftMaid, 440.632.5333; www.kraftmaid.com.

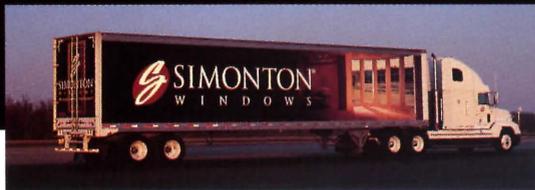


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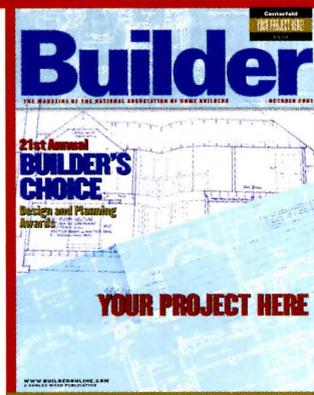
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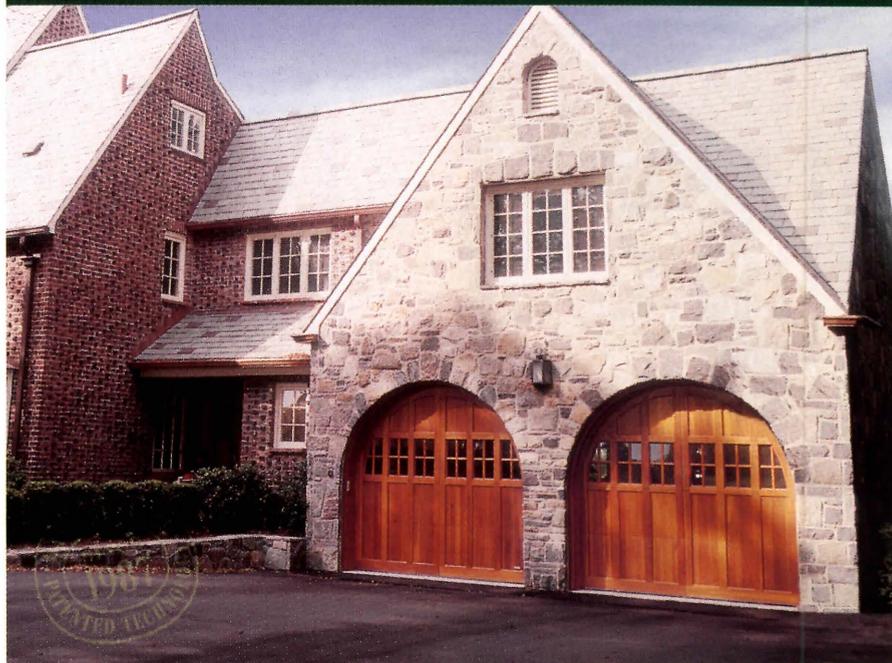
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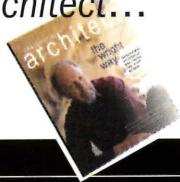
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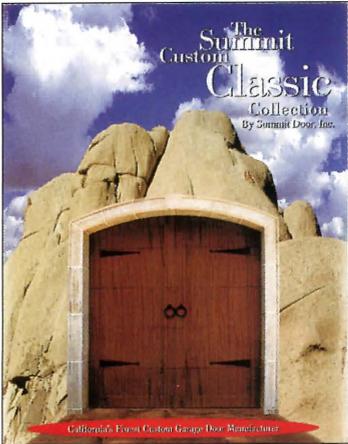
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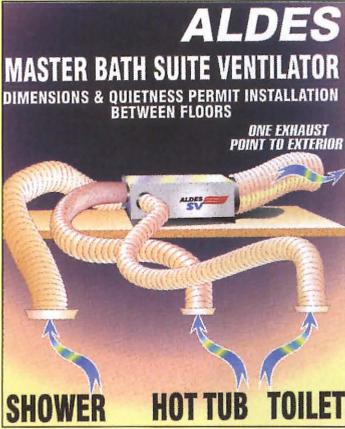


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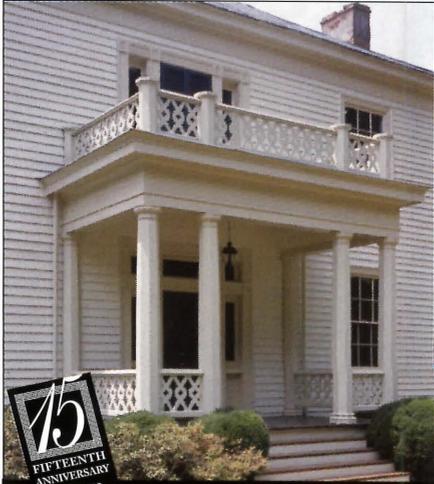
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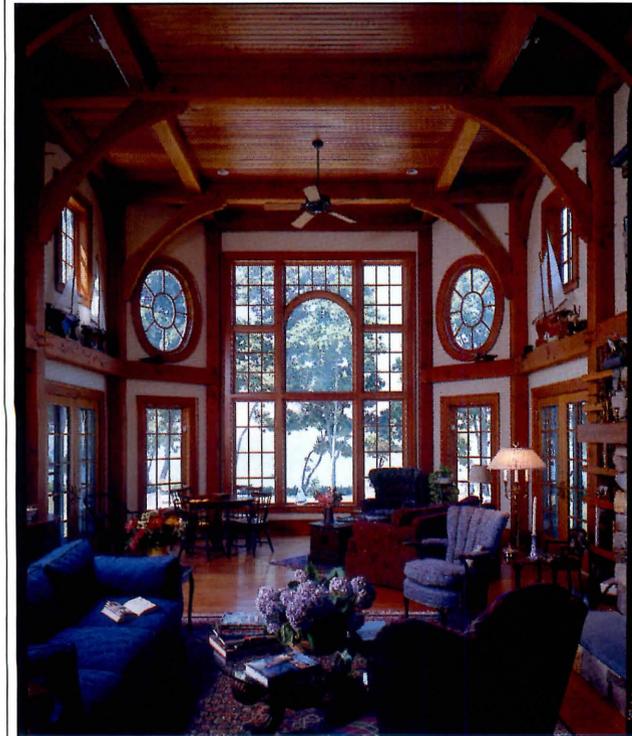
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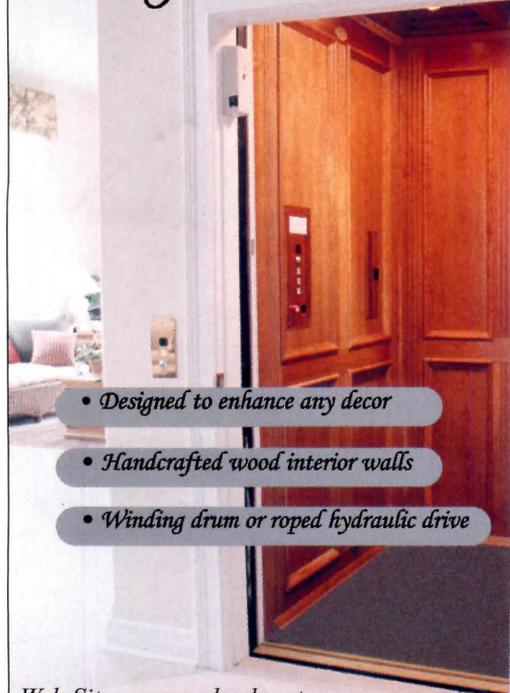
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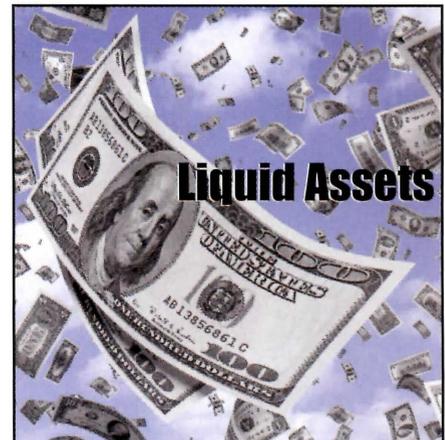
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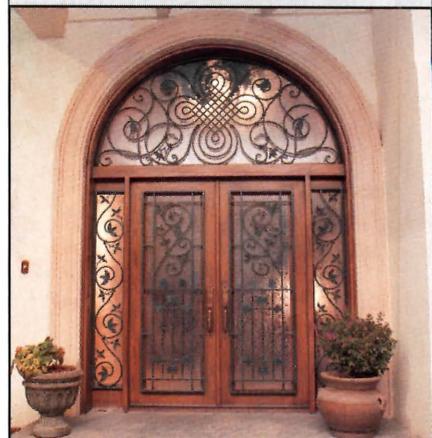
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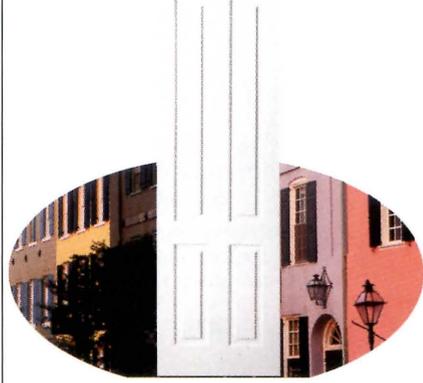
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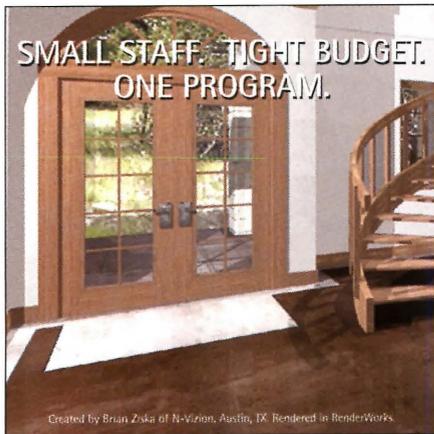


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from bauhaus to his house

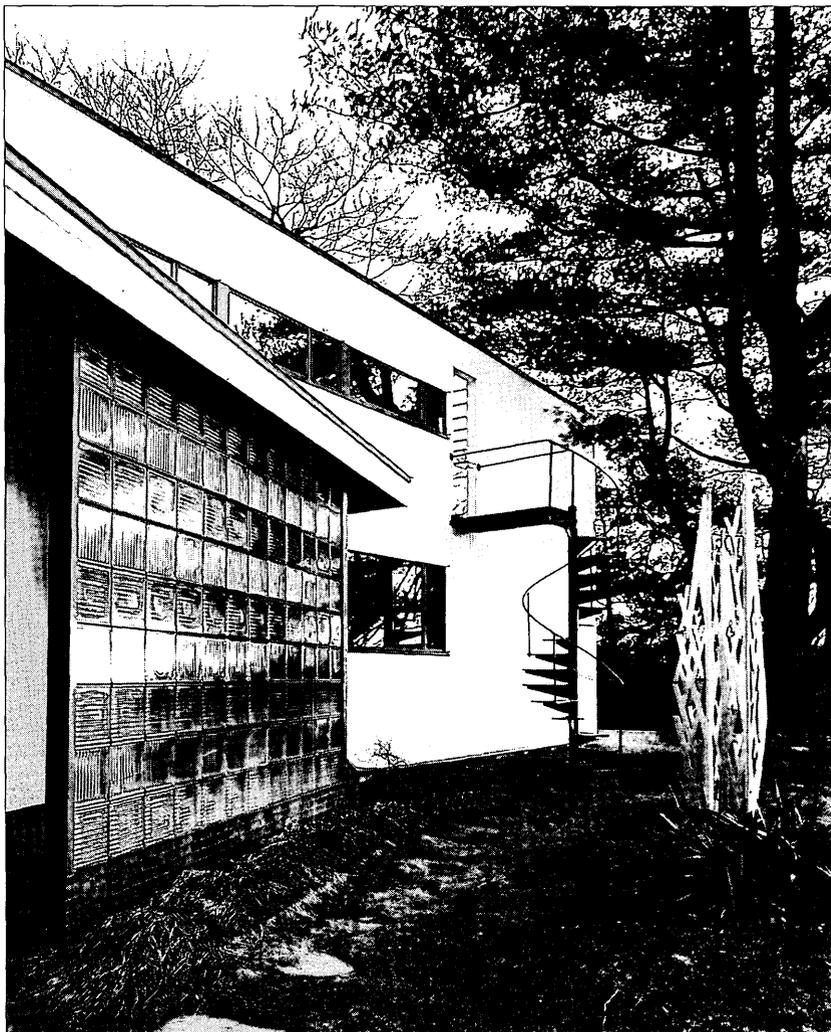
gropius house, lincoln, mass., 1938

walter gropius

“when i built my first house in the u.s.a.—which was my own—i made it a point to absorb into my own conception those features of the new england architectural tradition that i found alive and adequate.”

—from scope of total architecture, by walter gropius

The first home Walter Gropius designed after moving to the United States from Germany in 1938 was a modest structure for himself and his family in Lincoln, Mass. The house combined the Modern ideals of the Bauhaus with old New England standbys like white-painted clapboard siding, a brick chimney, and a screened-in porch. Visited by luminaries including Frank Lloyd Wright and Marcel Breuer, the Gropius House became a model for architects who wanted to balance the exciting new materials of the Industrial Age with the comforting elements of traditional residential design. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) now owns and maintains the house. For information on tours, call 781.259.8098 or go to www.spnea.org.—*meghan drueding*



Courtesy the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities