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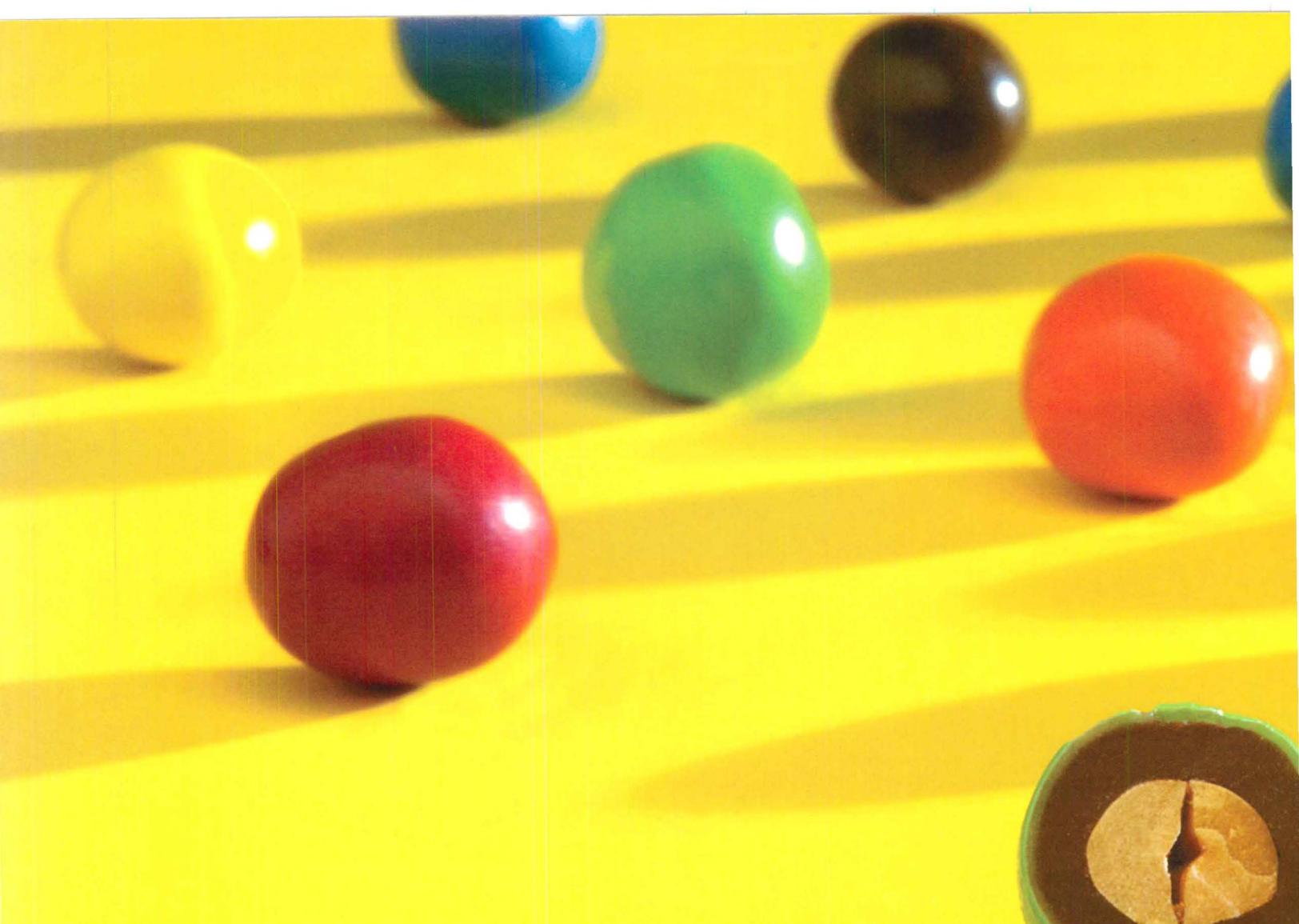
SEPTEMBER · OCTOBER 2006

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elsewhere

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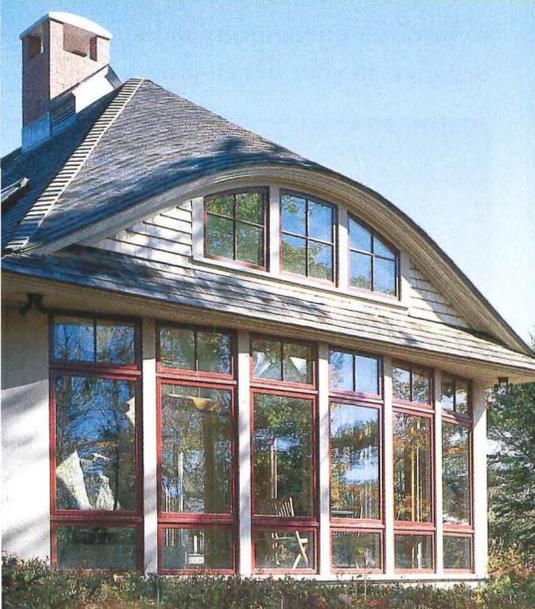
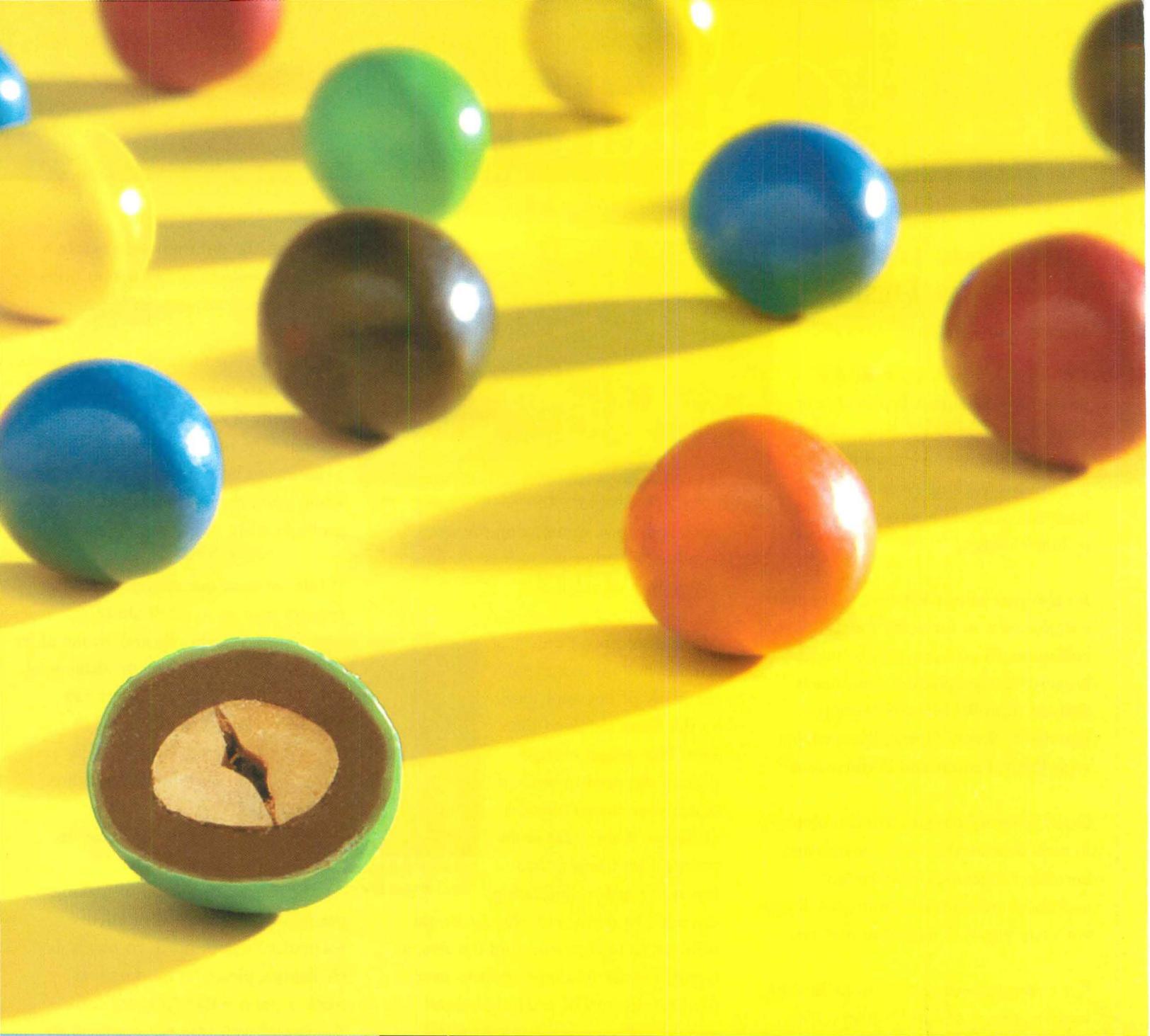
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Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

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An undercounter dishwasher drawer can eliminate the need to bend over.

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Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD
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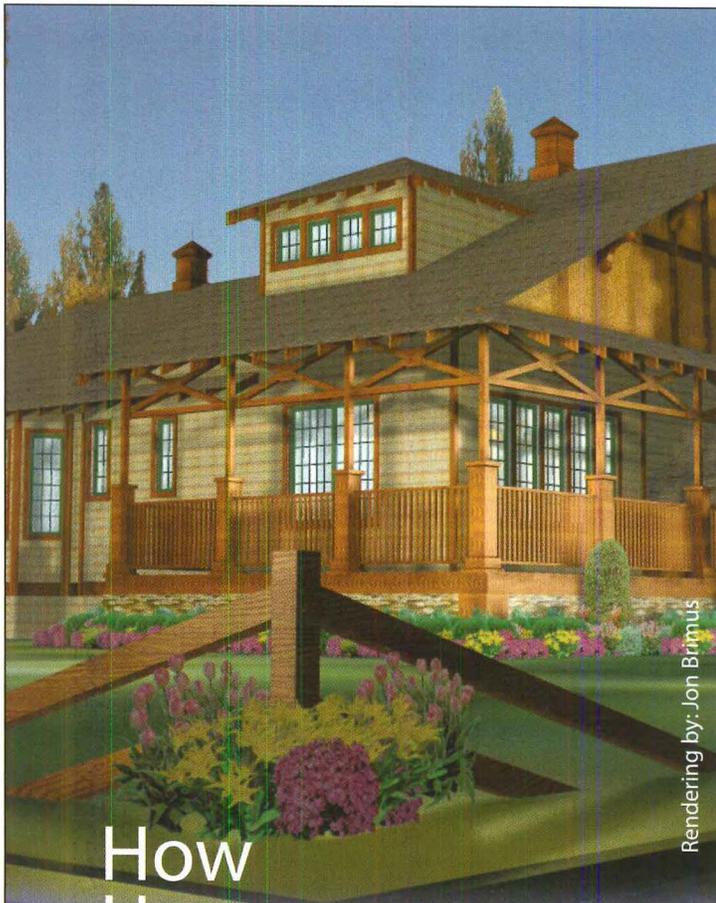
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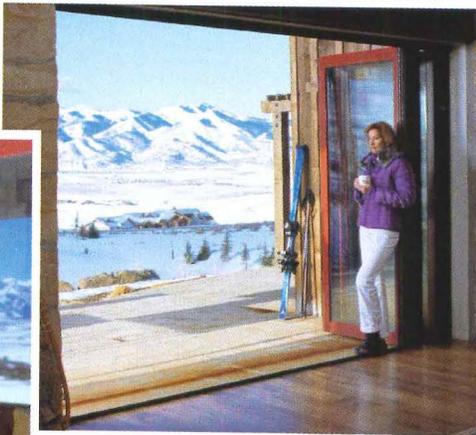
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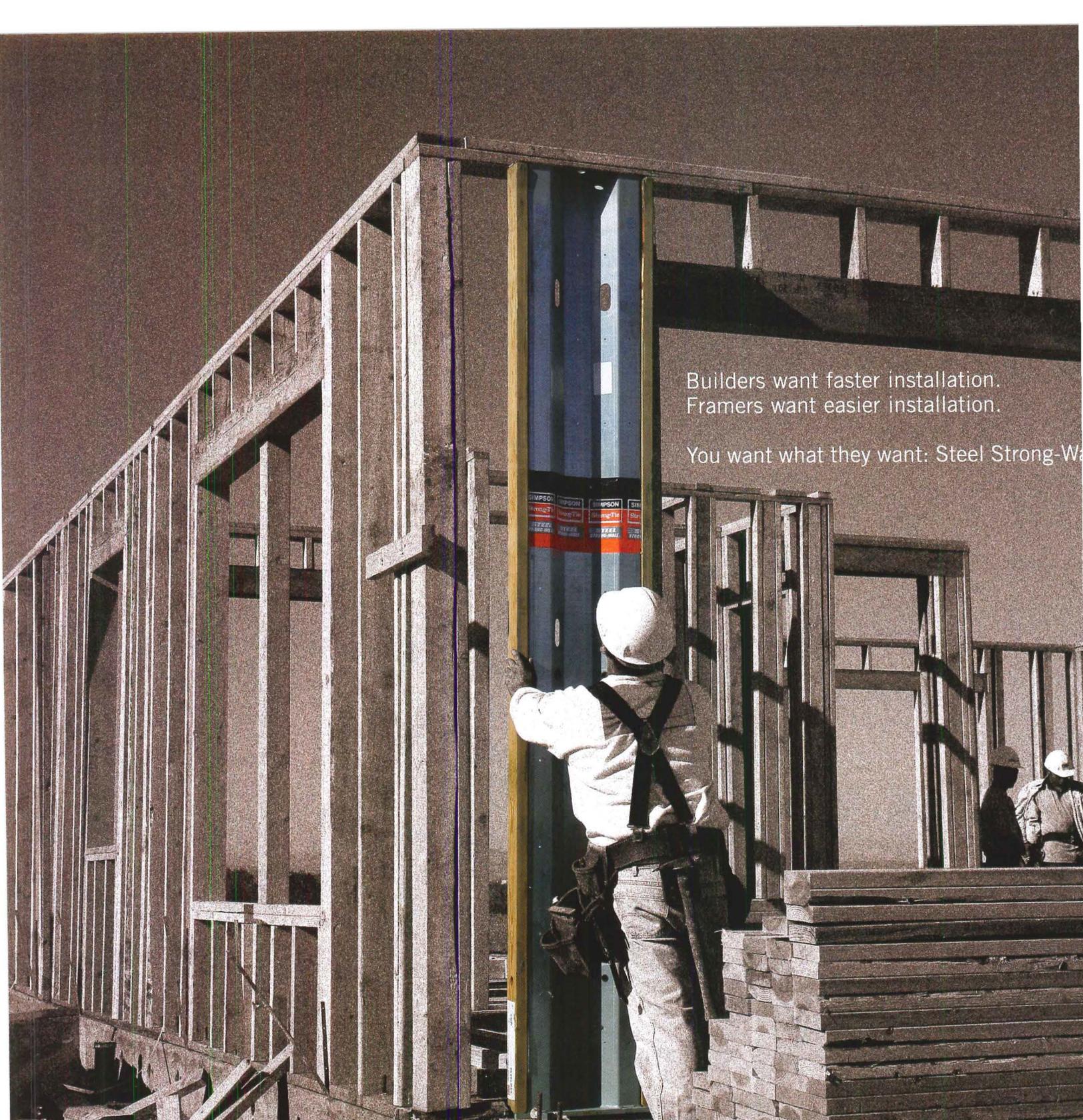
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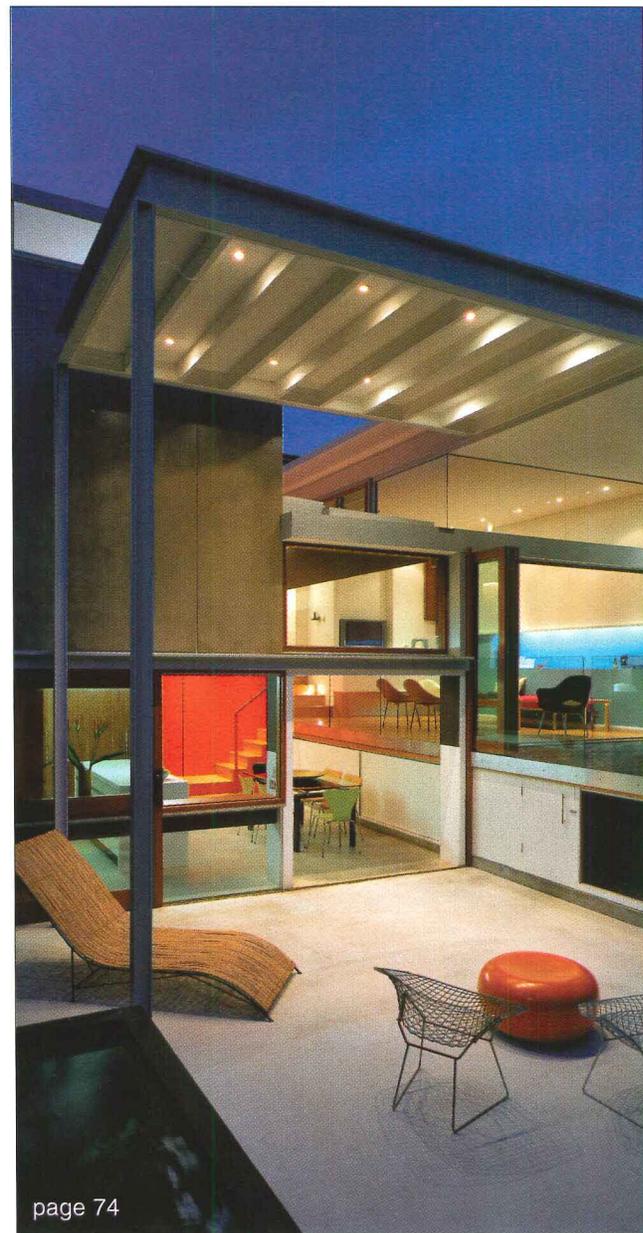
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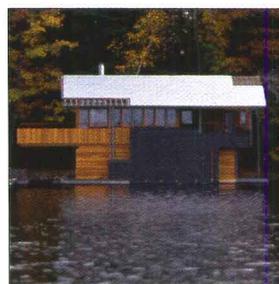
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It's a mild spring evening somewhere in the world. Photo: Murray Fredericks. Cover photo: Shim-Sutcliffe's Muskoka Boathouse, by James Dow.



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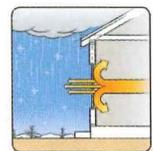
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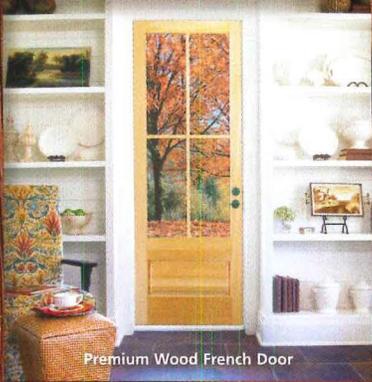


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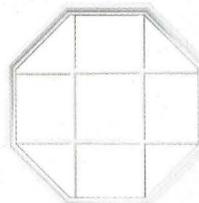
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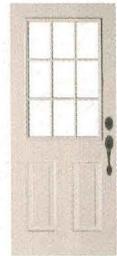
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from the editor

home of the brave?

where's our country's architectural diversity?

by s. claire conroy

every so often I let our editorial staff peer beyond the borders of the United States in their search for compelling houses to show you. This is usually when they start pleading with me to start an international edition of *residential architect*. They're so excited to find such vigorous visions of home. Certainly, we have admirable examples here, too, but why are there so many more outside our country's limits? It seems that elsewhere they're almost everywhere. We may be the land of the free and the home of the brave, but we're not very free or very brave when it comes to designing our homes.

One of the first major stories I wrote for this magazine was a piece on production housing in Orange County, Calif. It was my first trip to the Irvine area, and I was just stunned by the monotonous ubiquity of nouveau Mediterranean architecture I found there. (I called it "the Spanish imposition.") It permeated all the local housing done in the last 20 years. So I was positively gleeful when I stumbled upon some clusters of con-

temporary houses done in the 1960s and '70s. They were a breath of fresh air. They still looked bold and inventive decades after their heyday. It made me wonder what might have succeeded those houses if the developer of the Irvine ranch hadn't grabbed the clock and spun back the hands of time. There are hundreds of talented architects there, eager for a little stylistic leeway.

We love traditional architecture, too, here at *ra*—particularly if it's allowed to evolve and invent within its own parameters. But it can't be the only game in town. What do we have to grab hold of if everything looks the same? My high school science book had a photo of a cat, stymied by a flight of stairs covered in the same pattern as the floor in front of it. Faced with the uniformity of the pattern, the animal lost all depth perception and froze, unable to move forward or backward.

There is something marvelous about walking through older neighborhoods and seeing the hash marks on the timeline. Even more dazzling is seeing that timeline compressed—new house next to old house next to very old house. We're afraid of that kind of visual



Mark Robert Halper

dialogue in this country. And our streetscapes are poorer for it. We're so terrified of being fashion victims, we're stuck wearing our grandmothers' clothes. But will our hearts leap when, 20 years from now, we tour a subdivision of 1980s' versions of 1930s' versions of 19th century architecture?

Perhaps we'll accuse those who are now copying the mid-century modernists word for word of the same lack of invention later on. Maybe if they do it very well, they'll get a free pass. And that's fine. We can enjoy our revivals as long as we also tolerate our vivacious new inventions. What's so exciting about

the architecture in this issue is that it's part of a smorgasbord of design. It exists amid enviable variety.

It's hard to fathom why a country as smart, strong, and prosperous as ours is can be so unwilling to support diversity. We don't hesitate to impose our vision elsewhere, but imagine what we could learn if we opened our eyes to other ways of seeing. Then we could honestly call ourselves brave. **ra**

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

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letters

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sustaining sustainability

you make some very compelling points on either side of the divide as to whether and how costly beautiful, historic, and irreplaceable architecture could be maintained (“How Green Is Green Enough?” March 2006, page 15). I, too, would not want Fallingwater to collapse. It would be a worldly loss to lose the splendor of Venice. When will the next architectural masterpiece be built with little regard for the long-term cost to maintain the structure (let alone the long-term cost of utilities to keep it comfortable for its inhabitants)? I’m afraid it happens all the time. It’s much easier to design a work of art, which happens to be a residence, keeping in mind how it would look at sunset from a particular camera angle for all the fine architectural publications. When an architect starts to consider what it would cost to maintain that work of art, the architect must consider a whole new—and arguably more responsible and challenging—set of criteria.

Maybe my definition of architectural beauty is different from yours. It’s probably even different from the mainstream. And I’ll be the

first to admit that many of the most-published “deep green” residences are a bit on the clunky side. However, I see something admirable when discovering a home that’s built with short-term and long-term cost savings in mind. This country needs more residential architecture that does not demand more electricity, water, and other resources than it should. We, as a society, consume more energy, fresh water, and building materials per capita than anywhere else on the planet, despite the hundreds of thousands who live among us below the poverty line in third-world accommodations.

Until recently, I never considered our architectural choices as being something political or having the potential to have a global effect. Now I don’t see how sustainable vs. unsustainable architectural choices can avoid these considerations. Architects seldom think when drawing lines or typing specs that things are set into motion which result in another order for fuel to extract, refine, process, ship, assemble, maintain, disassemble, and dispose of the materials needed for every house and building we imagine. Those who do manage to design with minimal life-cycle costs should be honored just as much as

the superstars of design who do not.

Maybe none of my designs will be fortunate enough to be published in *residential architect*. That will not stop me from submitting when I believe one of the houses can stand on its own merit alongside the others in the magazine. I will not expect to have the submittal’s aesthetics graded on a curve when it comes to the magazine’s opinion of what is beautiful enough to be featured, but frankly, I would rather design homes that are efficient, health promoting, low maintenance, and long lasting and that give a sense of satisfaction and joy to my clients than to sacrifice any of these aspects for the privilege and honor of being published.

*Stephen Colley, AIA,
LEED AP*

*Stephen Colley/Architecture
San Antonio*

In reading your editorial, I couldn’t agree with you more that we shouldn’t offer a handicap to the design of green projects. The design of beautiful projects is what we are in the business of doing. But just as we may ask ourselves, What is a green project? we should also ask the question, What is a beautiful project? Is beauty

only skin-deep? Or should the measure of good design require a deeper level of design thinking?

What I like so much about the sustainable design movement is that it promotes smart design. Design that has depth. Design that you can grow old with. What is smarter than designing a house that responds to its site? That uses local materials and considers the vernacular? That doesn’t incorporate materials that harm people or the Earth? And that uses less energy and resources? No one said you had to give up anything; just design it smartly. We have moved beyond the post-1970s energy crisis design response to a movement that includes the triple bottom line: economy, equity, and environmental responsibility.

Architects and the public need to understand that environmentally responsible design isn’t something that would be nice to do or something that we should do, but rather that it’s something we must do. We are thought leaders within our communities and we have a responsibility to the public. We need to raise this issue with our clients and keep it in the front of our thinking. As it is, our grandchildren’s world will be a significantly

continued on page 20

different place than it was when we were kids. Let's go forward with the goal that we are not going to make it any worse. And let's agree that the definition of design excellence does not include projects that ultimately harm people or the planet.

We can do better.

*Kendall P. Wilson, AIA,
IIDA, LEED AP
Envision Design
Washington, D.C.*

as usual, you have written a thought-provoking piece.

The question you ask is one we can never ask enough, in my estimation.

Should New Orleans be rebuilt? Perhaps. The question is, What is the role of federal government? New Orleans is a special place because it's on the edge, but should the rest of us subsidize its rebuilding? Wouldn't it be better to spend the money on the rebuilding of cities not in the way of Category-4 and -5 hurricanes? Should money from Ohio be spent to subsidize people who live in hurricane alley? Should tax money from Ohio subsidize the construction of cities in the desert of Arizona or the high-plain desert of Denver, Las Vegas, et al?

As an architect and local elected official, I'm faced with many of these kinds of dilemmas on a daily basis. These are not easy or simple questions, but they are the questions we need to be asking if we are to make sound public policy.

I appreciate good design and believe everyone should have access to it. I've often thought we should have "design insurance," just as we have health insurance. Unfortunately most people don't think they can afford design, and so they don't. We are all impoverished.

We need to turn our focus back to community—loving our neighbors, if you will. Beauty, economy (ecology), community. We need all three.

*Rick Hawksley
Kent, Ohio*

I read your editorial with interest. I'm concerned that what you wrote would give the wrong impression: that sustainable homes are ugly.

Designers and architects who believe they have to sacrifice one for the other are lacking knowledge, imagination, or talent. There are so many ways to make a home more energy efficient and to use environmentally safe methods without changing the style.

In fact, there are many examples of materials that are more environmentally correct, more durable, reasonable in cost, and more beautiful than what is considered standard.

A well-known example is siding. Vinyl is the common cheap choice. Cement planks are a little more expensive but much more green. They produce less pollution in manufacturing and last much longer. For their life span, they cost less per year than vinyl. But no one would doubt that cement-plank siding looks much better than vinyl. It also offers much better storm protection from wind-driven debris. Win. Win. Win.

Yes, we can have our cake and eat it, too. It's not necessary to sacrifice beauty for green.

*Richard C. MacCrea
Mountain House Plans/
The Mountain Home Show
Blairsville, Ga.*

I'm a huge fan of your magazine but wanted to write a response to your editorial. Everyone defines beauty by his or her own experiences and ideals. One person's "beautiful" house is just another energy-wasting, too-big box to another. To someone tuned into a more

Earth-centered viewpoint, energy efficiency is much more beautiful than glossy pictures of fake stone and cementitious siding and other such materials that are so popular these days. That's not to say that all human-made products are bad, by any means.

If those who espouse "green" ideals are seen as being crazy hippies, as they have been for the last few decades, where will this country—and this world—be in the next 20 years? I agree with you that a project has to be buildable and appealing in order for it to have value in the marketplace, but sometimes in life, people have to stand up for what they think is the right thing to do—not just the easiest or cheapest thing to do or what will return the most one-time profit to them personally. Often the right thing to do is initially the most expensive thing to do, which in the United States doesn't usually work, because we're stuck on a different kind of "green": profits.

*Scott Gilbertson, Assoc. AIA
KKE Architects
Minneapolis*

*Letters have been edited
for clarity and length.*



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home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.

cultural exchange

Scott Allen, AIA, couldn't resist the chance to work on the Zhongkai Sheshan Villas, an on-the-boards residential development in the suburbs of Shanghai, China. "If you didn't do it, you'd kick yourself later," he says. Allen wasn't alone. In addition to his Seattle firm, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects, the project's design team included Baylis Architects, Stuart Silk Architects, and Living Architecture Inc., all based in the Seattle area; Taylor Lombardo Architects and Hunt Hale Jones Architects, both of San Francisco;

Boston's CBT Architects and ICON

architecture (Zhongkai Sheshan

Villas' master planner); Atlanta-based Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects; and Architectus of Auckland, New Zealand. Each firm independently designed several one-of-a-kind houses for the high-end, 79-villa community.

The developer, Shanghai-based ZK Group, deliberately chose a wide geographic and stylistic range of architects to allow for a variety



of design approaches. "The client wants 79 totally different houses," says Chinese architect Jessie Yan, a consultant on the project. Each firm was asked to integrate feng shui principles and a Chinese-influenced emphasis on water features into its own Western sensibilities. "It was an opportunity to do a contemporary house that related to the culture and traditions of China," says Richard Bertman, FAIA, a founding principal of CBT. Because the U.S. and New Zealand firms were signed on only through the design phase, local



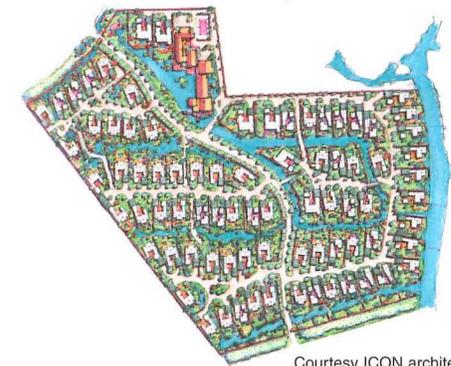
Courtesy Stuart Silk Architects



Courtesy Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects



Courtesy Hunt Hale Jones Architects



Courtesy ICON architecture

The master plan for Zhongkai Sheshan Villas (above) places 79 custom homes along a series of manmade waterways. Modern designs by firms such as Stuart Silk Architects (opposite) and Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects (top) will mingle with more traditionally styled houses from Hunt Hale Jones Architects (above, middle) and other firms.

Shanghai architects handled the construction drawings. But ZK Group is currently considering bringing the design architects into the construction process, which should start at the end of this year.—*meghan drueding*

movable beast

Toronto-based Sustain Design Studio first envisioned the miniHome as an off-the-grid house, but building code and zoning constraints ushered the firm in a different direction. Now, it's technically an RV, but principal Andy Thompson says it's intended—and fully equipped—to serve as a second home, cottage, vacation retreat, or guest cabin.

To keep costs down, the home is designed for mass production. Its structural insulated panel construction, panelized rainscreen walls, and rubber flooring make it green, too. Housed within its 8-foot-wide-by-36-foot-long shell are a full kitchen and bath, stainless steel appliances, and a 10,000 BTU forced-air furnace. Available upgrades include solar panels, engineered wood floors, and Baltic birch kitchen cabinets.

"It really isn't practical as a trailer because it's so heavy," Thompson says. "But the good thing is that you can use it in the wilderness and move it later, if you like." The house is priced from \$103,000 to \$160,000.—*nigel f. maynard*



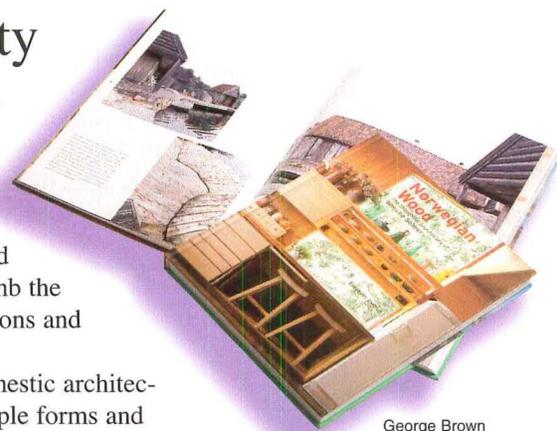
Photos: Courtesy Sustain Design Studio

The modest miniHome features a rainscreen cladding of Richlite paper-based siding, Galvalume, or cedar; Ikea cabinets, rubber floors, and low-VOC water-based finishes jazz up the interior.

domestic tranquility

One of the few prominent women architects in Norway during the last century, Wenche Selmer came of age during the post-World War II reconstruction boom. She traveled and worked abroad but returned to her native Oslo to plumb the richness of Norwegian building traditions and to raise her young family.

Delicate balances informed the domestic architecture she designed. She sought out simple forms and open plans that honored the past and embraced modern life and that brought out the natural beauty of the landscape. Her houses were so sensitive to their sites that she received permission to build close to the coastline even after conservation restrictions were put in place. As an associate professor at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (where the author of this book is a professor), she influenced scores of young architects with her technical accomplishments and her pragmatic, insightful understanding of residential architecture.—*s. claire conroy*



George Brown

Norwegian Wood: The Thoughtful Architecture of Wenche Selmer by Elisabeth Tostrup (Princeton Architectural Press, 2006)

on the boards / tropical modern



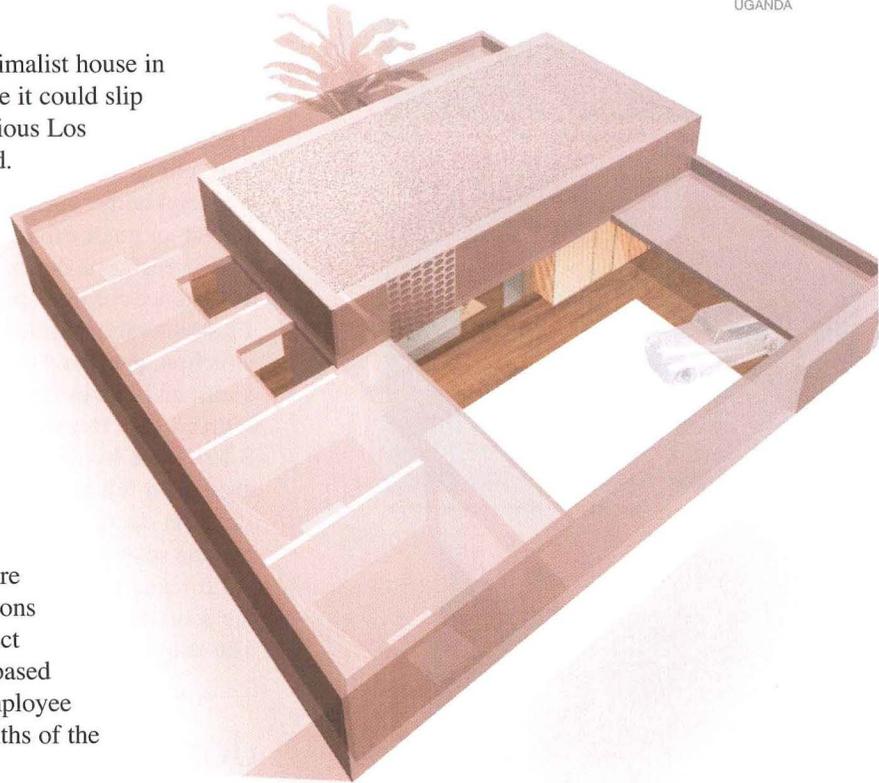
At first glance, this minimalist house in Juba, Sudan, looks like it could slip into any design-conscious Los Angeles neighborhood.

But its boxy volumes, open-air courtyards, and natural materials are designed for a very different cultural context. Juba, in Southern Sudan, is an agricultural village where family compounds are clustered among civic structures. Construction is 100 percent hand labor, and most building materials—bricks, mud blocks, timber supports, and the like—are made on site. Those local traditions inspired House Suliman, a project designed by Washington, D.C.-based Studio27 Architecture for an employee who lives in Sudan for two months of the year and plans to retire there.

Project architect Hans Kuhn had traveled in that part of the world, so he was familiar with the construction methods, the climate, and the nuances of local culture. “You greet people in the dining room/reception area; you would never

have anyone in the back of the house who’s not family,” Kuhn says. The house’s 12-foot-high walls sit directly atop the property’s 76-foot-by-76-foot perimeter. A double-height living room at the center separates the public and private spaces from front to back and is surrounded by covered corridors that are open to the outdoors. Those corridors link the living core to a reception area and dining room on the right side and to two guest bedrooms and two baths—each with a tiny courtyard—on the left.

House Suliman reinterprets the traditional family compounds of rural Sudan, where separate structures for cooking, eating, and sleeping are clustered to form open courtyards. Studio27’s design builds in flexibility; the rooms can be connected or closed off as the occupants desire.



Renderings: Courtesy Studio27 Architecture

“Normally you would have the bathrooms separated from the house by a distance of at least six feet,” Kuhn says. “But since we wanted the house to be one volume, the air is filtered through the courtyards.” In back, another private courtyard with a cooking pit is shared by the master bedroom and kitchen.

The building is cooled naturally, thanks to the tall living room that captures the constant breezes. At night, cool air drifting downward is caught by the courtyards and funneled into bedrooms. Interior and exterior masonry walls help maintain those lower temperatures in the heat of the day. And a tank beneath the building collects rainwater from the roof, storing it for the long dry season from November to March. —*cheryl weber*



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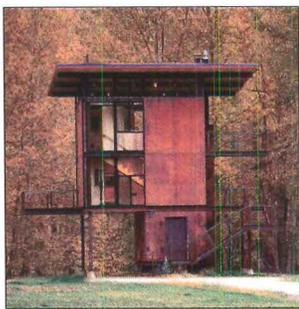


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calendar



Benjamin Benschneider

2007 residential architect design awards: call for entries

entry deadline: november 10
binder deadline: january 8

Our annual *residential architect* Design Awards program honors outstanding architecture in 15 categories, including custom, renovation, multi-family, production, architectural interiors, and on the boards. Winning projects will be published in the May 2007 issue of *residential architect* and honored during the 2007 AIA National Convention in San Antonio. Shown: Delta Shelter, Mazama, Wash., by Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects, a 2006 grand award winner in the Custom / 3,500 Square Feet or Less category. To register, visit www.radesignawards.com or www.residentialarchitect.com, or go to page 33 in this magazine. Call 202.736.3407 with questions.

custom home design awards 2007

entry deadline: november 15
binder deadline: january 17

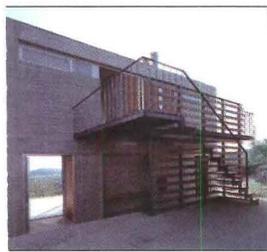
Houses designed for a specific client and site may be submitted by builders, architects, remodelers, designers, or other industry professionals. Categories include custom home, custom kitchen, custom bath, renovation, accessory building, and custom detail. A new category for outdoor spaces has been added this year. Winners will be featured in the May 2007 issue of *CUSTOM HOME* magazine and honored during the 2007 AIA National Convention in San Antonio. To register, go to www.chdesignawards.com or www.customhomeonline.com.

aga khan award for architecture

entry deadline: october 15

Established in 1977 by His Highness the Aga Khan, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture is presented every three years to projects that address the needs of societies in which Muslims have a significant presence. Prizes totaling up to \$500,000 will be awarded to outstanding examples of contemporary design, social housing, community

improvement and development, restoration, reuse, area conservation, landscaping, and environmental sensitivity. Shown: The B2 House in Büykhüsün, Turkey, by architect Han Tümertekin, a 2004 award winner. For an entry form, visit www.akdn.org/agency/aktc_aka.html.



Courtesy Aga Khan Development Network

10th international architecture exhibition

through november 19
venice biennale, venice, italy

This year's exhibition will explore the social, economic, and cultural challenges facing large metropolitan areas around the world, focusing specifically on the role of architects and architecture in sustaining democratic urban communities. Film, photography, and mixed-media presentations about 16 cities on four different continents are scheduled. For details, go to www.labiennale.org.



Courtesy The National Trust for Scotland

glasgow mackintosh festival

through december 30
glasgow, scotland

The yearlong celebration of Glasgow, Scotland, native

Charles Rennie Mackintosh comes to a head this September with major exhibitions at the Hunterian Art Gallery, the Glasgow School of Art, and the Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum. These exhibitions, along with other festival events, are designed to highlight Mackintosh's architecture and interior design innovations, including the 1903 Hill House (seen here). For a festival schedule or further details, visit www.glasgowmackintosh2006.com.

massive change: the future of global design

through december 31
museum of contemporary art, chicago

Curated by Toronto designer Bruce Mau, this traveling exhibition addresses the prominent role design plays in all aspects of human life, offering compelling examples of contemporary design innovations in urban planning, product design, transportation, and more. (The pioneering Twike, a hybrid vehicle first developed in Switzerland, is seen here.) *Massive Change* is part of a global effort to produce desired outcomes through good design and will ultimately tour seven countries on three continents. For more information and museum hours, visit www.mcchicago.org or call 312.280.2660.



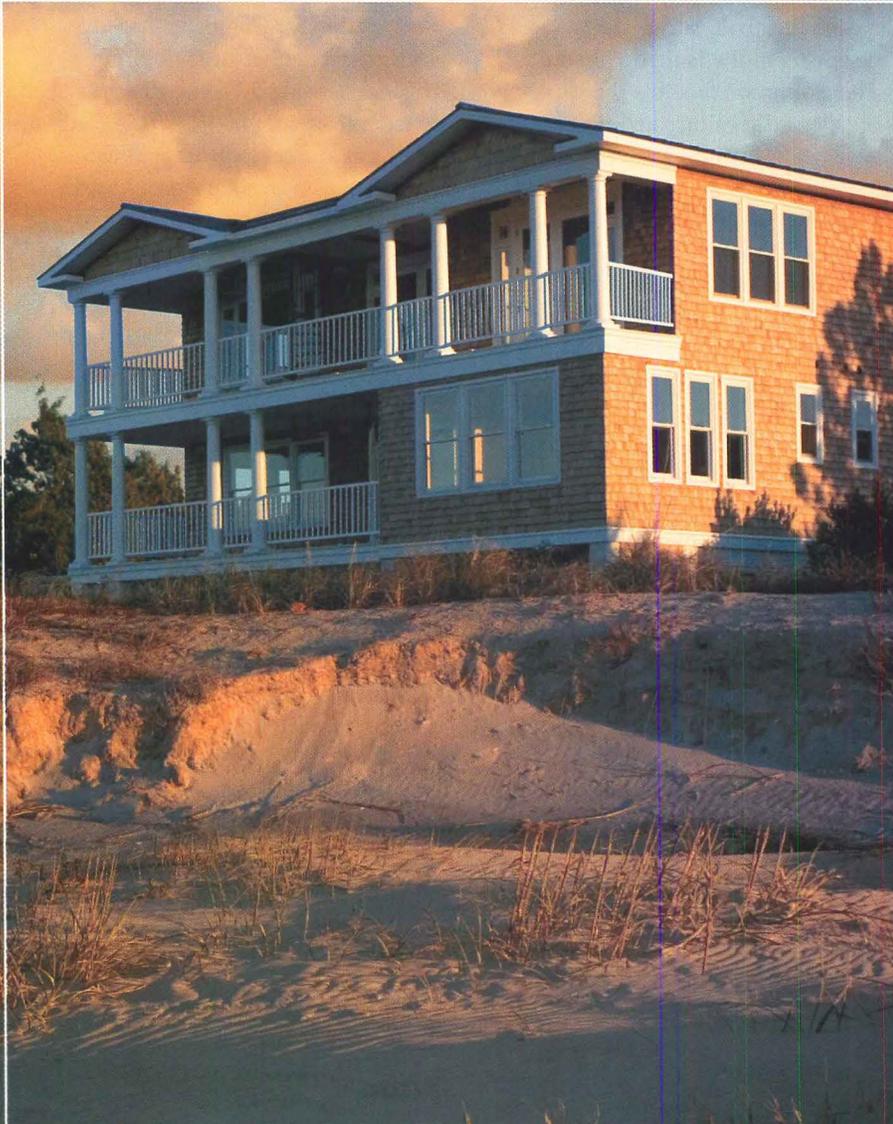
Courtesy www.twike.ca

continued on page 32

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Courtesy Design Museum

design mart

through january 7
design museum, london

This annual event, which partially coincides with September's London Design Festival, surveys new designers in the United Kingdom. The exhibition features the work of selected furniture and product designers who have graduated within the last five years. Highlights of the show include Philip Worthington's computer- and light-driven Shadow Monsters; Max Lamb's simple, yet sophisticated, furniture; and Peter Marigold's innovative Make / Shift shelving system (shown), which expands and contracts to fill tight spaces. Visit www.designmuseum.org or call 44.870.833.9955 for more information.

simply droog: 10 + 3 years of creating innovation and discussion

september 21–january 14
museum of arts & design, new york city

In 1993 Dutch designers Gijs Bakker and Renny Ramakers began a design collective called Droog Design. Using low-cost industrial and recycled materials, the designers created objects that are informed by cultural developments and that fit in with the "droog" (unadorned or simple) style of the collection. This is the North American premiere of the show, which has traveled Europe and will continue to other venues in North and South America. For details, call 212.956.3535 or go to www.madmuseum.org.

suburban escape: the art of california sprawl

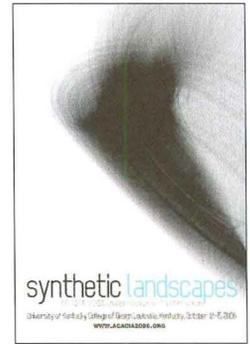
september 23–march 4
san jose museum of art, san jose, calif.

Spanning multiple disciplines (including art history, architecture, history, geography, and environmental studies), this groundbreaking exhibition offers a first look at suburban art created in California since 1950. Work by more than two dozen artists who have devoted much of their careers to various aspects of suburban design—suburban development, tract home architecture, home construction, and land use, for example—will be highlighted. Call 408.294.2787 or visit www.sjmusart.org for museum hours.

acadia 2006: synthetic landscapes

october 12–15
university of kentucky, louisville, ky.

The annual conference of the Association for Computer-Aided Design in Architecture will bring together leading thinkers, educators, and design industry leaders from around the world to discuss both the practical and theoretical applications of design. Key-note speakers include Aaron Betsky, director of the Netherlands Architecture Institute, and Lisa Iwamoto, principal, IwamotoScott Architecture. To register, visit www.acadia2006.org.



riba conference 2006

october 27–28
teatro alle tese, venice, italy

"Social City: Architecture and Change," the theme of the Royal Institute of British Architects' annual conference, will explore the question, Does good architecture benefit society? Attendees will also debate new developments in the design field intended to make cities safer, greener, and more attractive to live in. The speaker roster includes leaders in international architecture and social and political figures. The conference theme links to the 10th International Architecture Exhibition, which will be held in Venice concurrently. For details, go to www.architecture.com/go/Architecture/Events_5475.html.

reinvention 2006

december 6–8
omni san diego hotel



"No Limits: The Entrepreneurial Practice" goes beyond the boundaries of single-family house design to explore how residential architects are breaking into complementary disciplines. Join colleagues to debate the merits of integrating interior and landscape design into your practice, broadening into development and construction, implementing alternative practice models, or extending your influence into the public realm. The conference also features a housing tour, a design charrette, and a meeting of the Congress of Residential Architecture. To register, visit www.reinventionconf.com, e-mail reinvention@hanleywood.com, or go to page 69.

—jillian berman

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- Affordable Housing
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deadlines

entry form and fee: november 10, 2006
completed binders: january 8, 2007

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kitchen: brazilia familiar

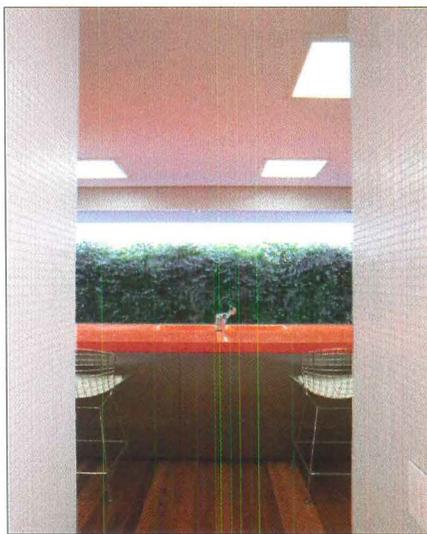
São Paulo, Brazil, native Márcio Kogan loves the cacophony of his hometown. The spirit of diversity that permeates this South American city allows the architect to peddle his unabashedly modern designs without fear of offending anyone. In fact, not a single eyebrow is raised (except in admiration) when one of his self-described “bold, classic, contemporary” houses goes up in São Paulo’s tightly knit residential areas. “This city is characterized by the most complete urban, social, and architectural chaos,” Kogan enthuses. “Ergo, any project fits perfectly into the landscape: Neo-Classic, French Gothic, Colonial—all styles live together perfectly in this architectural Disneyland.”

The clients for this minimalist house, situated in downtown São Paulo, came to Kogan because they appreciated his “nothing exaggerated” philosophy. The approach, which creates work that is subtle rather than showy, is especially important when designing kitchens because their function has changed so dramatically in recent years. According to Kogan, the kitchen historically has been positioned as a secondary room at the back of Brazilian houses because it’s “frequently used by the employees of the house” for mostly utilitarian purposes. More recently, however, Brazilians—“mostly men,” he says—“have begun cooking as a hobby,” making the kitchen a social hotspot of the contemporary Brazilian house.

The homeowners wanted their kitchen to capitalize on the trend without compromising style or sophistication. They also wanted it equipped to accommodate the well-known chefs they often invite over to cook for their friends. Setting the stage for chefs of both the amateur and celebrity variety is a 4-foot-deep-by-20-foot-long island that bisects the room. Its vivid orange countertop draws attention to the cooking area, which incorporates a gas cooktop and integrated sink at one end and a

generous helping of open workspace at the other. Stainless steel cabinets with matching appliances play supporting roles to the sleek, brightly topped island.

Sandblasted glass panels behind the counter seating area conceal a generous amount of storage. Their vertical frames counterbalance horizontal dividers in the folding glass doors that lead to a cobblestone terrace for outdoor entertaining. Mosaic tile walls



Oversized, symmetrically spaced, and recessed squares of artificial lighting in the ceiling reflect off the kitchen’s shiny surfaces, giving the room an overall sheen that radiates warmth.

form a floor-to-ceiling backsplash throughout the kitchen, making it easy to clean, and Brazilian walnut floors soften and warm the room’s high-tech palette.

project continued on page 36



Photos: Alan Weintraub/arcaid.co.uk



The long kitchen interacts with the house's exterior spaces through a sliding wall of glass (left). A soaring hedgerow opposite the diaphanous wall (above) offers seclusion from the urban setting.

architect: Márcio Kogan, Márcio Kogan Architects, São Paulo, Brazil

design team: Samanta Cafardo, Renata Furlanetto, Suzana Glogowski, Bruno Gomes, Regiane Leão, Paula Moraes, Oswaldo Pessano, Diana Radomysler, and Gisela Zilberman, Márcio Kogan Architects

general contractor: DP Engenharia, São Paulo

resources: bathroom and kitchen fittings and fixtures: Deca; cooktop: Gaggenau; dishwasher, oven, and refrigerator: Brastemp; kitchen countertops: DuPont (Corian); lighting: Lumini

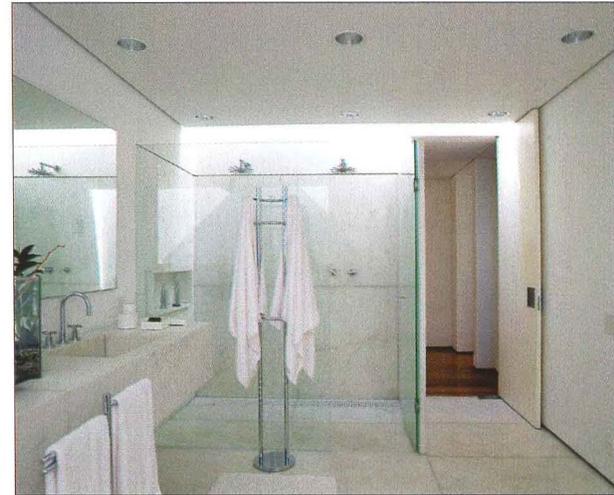
k + b studio

bath: austerity powers

Normally, Kogan would have extended the rich wood floors from the rest of the house into the master bathroom, “but in this case,” he says, “the clients wanted sterile and extreme.” What they got was a polished, durable oasis of white Brazilian marble that nearly blankets the room without overpowering it.

Oversized tiles give the marble depth and human scale as it covers the sybaritic soaking tub, hovers along the wall in the form of a spacious double vanity, and becomes the backdrop for twin starburst showerheads. A full-length mirror, hung horizontally over the vanity, teams with polished surfaces to bounce natural and manmade light around the white space. Shadow boxes-cum-storage cubbies in the tub and shower store shampoo, candles, and other essentials.

Sharp-eyed visitors will spot Kogan’s meticulous sense of symmetry in the placement of those cubbies, whose bottom edges align with each other and with the top of the vanity across the room. In other alignments, the mirror tops out at the same height as the frameless shower enclosure and the ceiling stops exactly above the outer edges of the bathing areas that flank it. The rectilinear forms in the master bath hearken back to the long, narrow proportions of the kitchen, even as deeply recessed joints between the floor, walls, and ceiling emphasize the separation of each space.—*shelley d. hutchins*



Photos: Alan Weintraub/arcaid.co.uk



Texturized plaster walls and light veining in the marble help soften the austerity of an all-white bathroom. Wall-to-wall skylights at either end of the room wash bathers in natural light.



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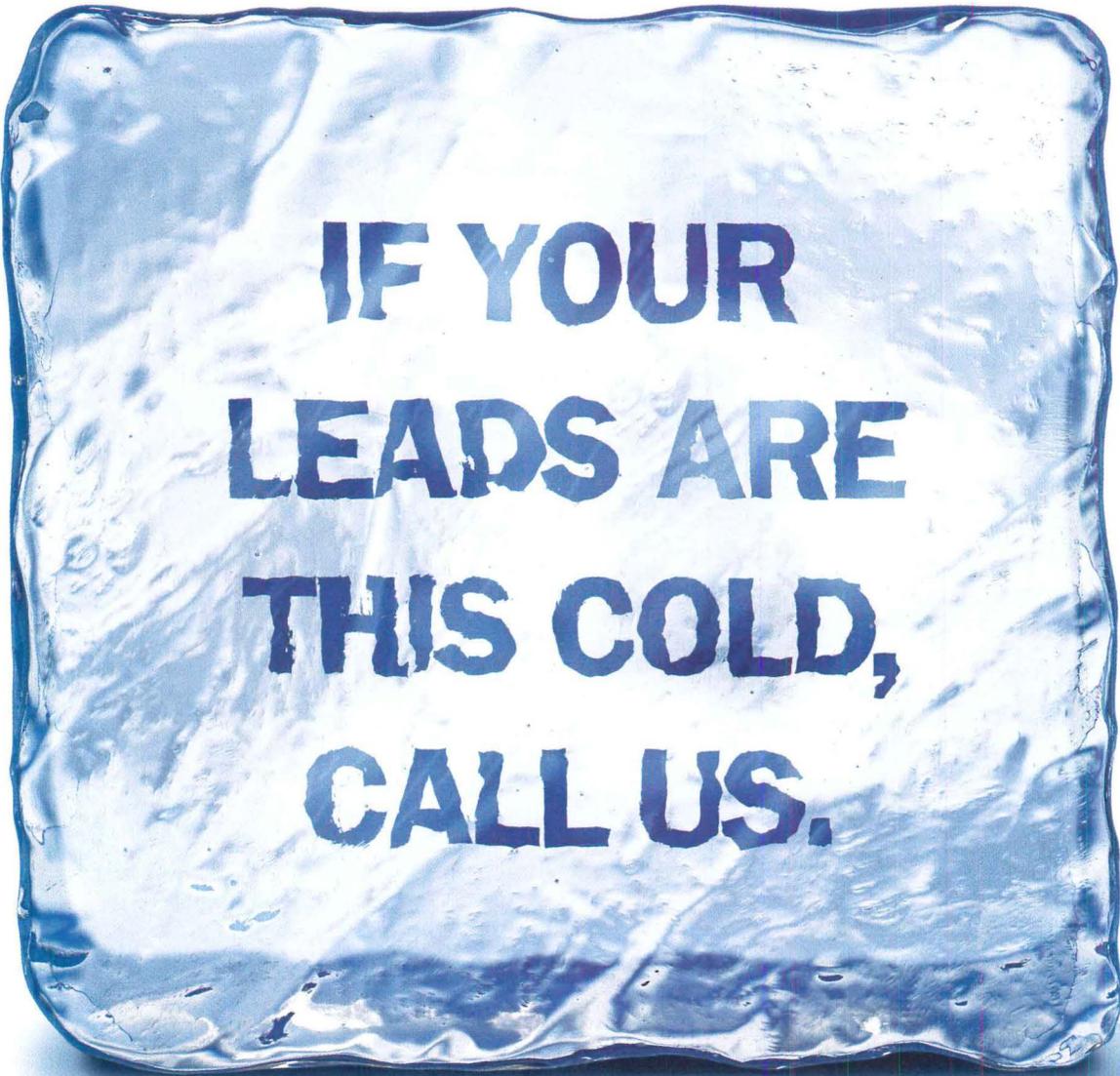
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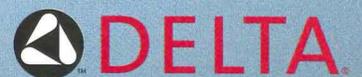
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casa maya

where a house commission in honduras goes,
adventure follows.

by david weingarten

Seven years ago, Mario Saravia stopped by our office to discuss a house he was planning. Mario is a framing subcontractor who'd worked on several houses we'd designed in the Hills of Oakland, Calif. This new house was intended for Mario and his family and was to be sited alongside a golf course at the edge of a mountainous rain forest outside Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

He had in mind a courtyard dwelling—about which it was easy to enthuse—decked out in a vaguely Spanish Colonial style (white stucco walls, clay tile roof), where ensued a momentary leveling off of our high hopes. Site information was sketchy, documented solely in Mario's memory. Lot dimensions? "About 90 feet by 175 feet," he said. Topography? "Pretty flat," he recalled. Utilities? "We'll work it out," he assured me. Structural design of this concrete-frame-and-block building was to be by one of Mario's uncles.

A modest scope, with a yet more modest fee, was agreed upon, and the game was on.

ruinous notion

Early on, we realized that

Honduras is home to Copán—the site of a most spectacular set of Mayan ruins. This got us thinking about Mayan Revival buildings in 1920s Los Angeles and about Robert Stacy-Judd, a British-born architect who dreamed up several of the most endearing of these eccentric confections. Photographs of Stacy-Judd show him dressed alternately as an explorer—complete with pith helmet, holstered handgun, and, naturally, briar pipe—or as a Mayan prince, with exotic plumed headdress and hieroglyphic-patterned clothing.

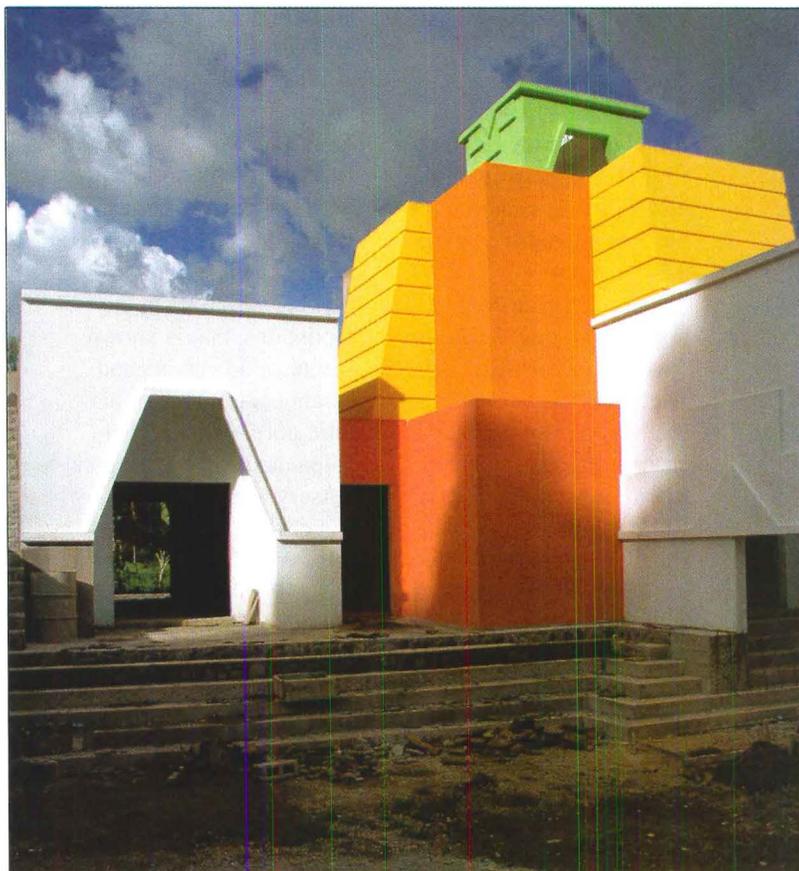
Channeling our inner Stacy-Judd, we arrived at a courtyard scheme—imagined as Mayan Revival Revival style—incorporating a variety of characteristic forms, patterned decoration, and colors. This was, of course, a very distant cry from Spanish Colonial, and it had yet to gain the client's endorsement. It developed, of course,

that Mario had visited Copán several times, was thoroughly engaged by the place, and therefore was enthusiastic about the proposal. Drawings were prepared and construction commenced. Four years after the initial meeting, Mario dropped by with photographs showing progress. He was pleased. So, too, were we (as was our inner Stacy-Judd).

Construction moved along deliberately, and it

may be that the Maya built their pyramids more quickly than we have built ours. Yet progress was steady, and two years ago, as the color scheme (based on the Rosalila Temple at Copán) was being developed, Mario suggested I visit the site to begin work on the interiors. Stacy-Judd organized two different expeditions to Mayan and Aztec sites in Mexico in the 1920s, and his explorer bona fides are

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Courtesy David Weingarten

Oakland, Calif.-based Ace Architects drew on the imagery of Mayan ruins for the building forms, colors, and decorative motifs of the house it designed for its framing subcontractor and his family outside Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

impressive. I am no Robert Stacy-Judd, however. When it comes to exotic travel, I am a coward.

site visit

A year ago, of course, I found myself on a midnight flight to Tegucigalpa. It is embarrassing to admit now, but I wondered if I would survive the trip.

Early indications were not encouraging. I emerged from the airport there to a sweltering day—blindingly bright and overwhelmingly chaotic. Presently, though, Mario drove up in a small white truck whose windshield was crossed by two bands of reflective film, set inches apart. The effect was paramilitary, enhanced by the man riding shotgun in the truck's bed.

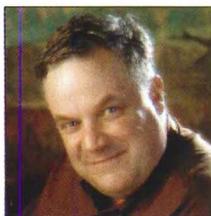
We next made our way through traffic so astonishingly free-form, improvisational, and occasionally terrifying that it's beyond my ability to describe. Mario put me up in a great hotel, though—a 1970s tower gotten up in a kind of International Mayan Revival style—and that helped restore my optimism.

Over the next several days, I visited the house half a dozen times and worked up a scheme for the interior and furnishings

featuring Mayan-ornamented couches, tables, and light fixtures, as well as oversized hieroglyphic reliefs of Tlaloc, the god of rain. A jungly landscape plan also ensued. In the course of all this were visits with Mario's relatives; dinner with his expat American neighbors; an excursion with a couple of friends to a village, high up in the mountains, that is known for its wood carvers and ceramicists; a tour of historic portions of Tegucigalpa; and trips to the local nursery and paint store.

For some reason, it's impossible to recall this trip without thinking about guns. The paint store—a pleasant, though otherwise unremarkable, place—featured two security guards, one lugging around an outsized semiautomatic weapon, the other with a twin-barrel shotgun resting on his shoulder. There were guns everywhere in Tegucigalpa, and they all appeared to be large caliber. Robert Stacy-Judd's peashooter would impress no one in today's Honduras. The proliferation of large-bore weaponry is, of course, related to another indelible impression, which is of the country's widespread, abject poverty.

*“it is embarrassing to admit now,
but i wondered if
i would survive the trip.”*



Terry McCarthy



Courtesy David Weingarten



Courtesy Ace Architects

A pyramidlike structure (top) at the rear of the building contains a bedroom and an upstairs study. It also provides access to a rooftop deck. The home's courtyard scheme satisfies the initial vision of both client and architect.

And yet, the furnishings, light fixtures, and other interior fittings are in production; the landscaping is being installed; and Mario has raised the possibility of one further visit to oversee finishing touches and to celebrate the house's completion. For the party, I'm unsure whether to dress in an exotic plumed head-dress or a pith helmet, briar

pipe, and holstered handgun. Well, maybe not the handgun. *ra*

David Weingarten is a partner and founder of Ace Architects in Oakland, Calif. He is the author of Bay Area Style: Houses of the San Francisco Bay Region (Rizzoli, 2004) and California Ranch Houses (Rizzoli), out next year.

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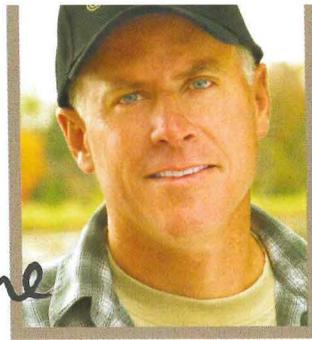
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exploring the natural alliance of feng shui and architecture.

by cheryl weber

Vincent M. Smith came to feng shui by way of the theater.

A graduate of Harvard College and the Yale Law School, he practiced real estate law for 25 years while spending nights and weekends perfecting his first loves: acting, directing plays, and designing stage sets. When he thought about it, he realized he was creating a home for the actors for two hours, designing sets that evoked the play's energy. "I was intrigued by the idea that you can create spaces that enhance the negative tension and anger to go with the plotline or do the opposite and create a positive space," he says. "And that's how I got into feng shui."

That's also how he came to publish a book, written with Barbara Lyons Stewart, AIA, called *Feng Shui: A Practical Guide for Architects and Designers* (Kaplan Publishing, 2006). It's significant that a book like this should be directed to architects, who traditionally have scorned feng shui as tilting toward the superstitious and new age. They've criticized it for the emphasis some practitioners place on decorative fixes such as wind chimes and



Earl Holloway

Chinese firecrackers rather than on sound space planning. The language of feng shui can seem mystical and magical to serious professionals, with all of its talk about energy flow and the five elements (earth, fire, metal, water, and wood). But Smith says his intent

is to de-Easternize those ideas, and that it's all about creating a harmonious environment that affects the way people feel and behave. "Things like hanging crystals and placing firecrackers over the front door are really the superficial aspects of feng

shui and have nothing to do with its underlying philosophy," Smith says. "As far as I'm concerned, feng shui is just a form of environmental psychology. It's about how space reflects who we are and how it's constantly affecting us."

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It's clear there's a connection between what makes people feel comfortable in a house and what feng shui, at various levels, is trying to achieve. Feng shui terms like chi—or life energy—and yin and yang are metaphors for the sense of orderliness, fluidity, and balance that architects are taught to design into their buildings. For example, Smith writes that porches and porticos are useful as a middle ground between outdoors and indoors because “the transition from the energy of the open sky to the closed-in space of the home is dramatic.”

Another example: When people enter a front door and are immediately confronted with a wall six feet away, it stops them in their tracks—Smith calls it blocking their energy—and creates stress by requiring them to decide which way to go. A solution for a wall that can't be moved is to hang a mirror that gives the space a feeling of depth or to hang a painting that reads in the direction visitors should go. Likewise, a staircase placed directly at the front door immediately pulls one's energy upstairs, where the private rooms are usually located. “For guests, having the private part of the home thrust upon their subconscious is generally not the optimum greeting,” he writes. All of these ideas seem fairly intuitive. Then there are the tenets that will surely lose a few architects: “Railings should be built on both

sides of the stairs to create a feeling of support,” he writes, and “the risers should be closed so that energy does not ‘leak’ through.”

Smith emphasizes that the principles in the book are meant to be reinterpreted, played with, and adapted. “At first blush architects think I'm trying to do their work—they know how to design a building and don't need a feng shui consultant,” Smith says. “On the other hand, many architects are like sponges. They want to absorb all of this because it makes sense.”

widening the circle

Well, much of it does. To the uninitiated Western mind, many feng shui fundamentals warrant skepticism. In her preface, co-author Stewart notes that while architects often apply feng shui instinctively, there's an integral mystical aspect to it that does change the design process. Feng shui means wind and water, and it's a way of interpreting how people can live in tune with nature. “It begins by understanding our human need for ‘nature’ and ... creating the best environment for the mental and physical health of the person who will live and work in the space,” she writes. (Like Smith, Stewart is a principal at Panergetics, a feng shui consultancy with offices in New York City and San Francisco.)

Practitioners routinely use a complex, esoteric

good vibes

here are 12 tips for a schematic design checklist, adapted from *Feng Shui: A Practical Guide for Architects and Designers* by Vincent M. Smith and Barbara Lyons Stewart, AIA.

1. Use regular and complete shapes for floors, departments, and rooms—preferably the Golden Rectangle. Although nonorthogonal structures may look more interesting from the outside, they inevitably create problems for the occupants. The interest quotient can be supplied instead by porches, projecting entrances, landscaping, and other design elements.
2. Place the main entrance of the building in the center to create a feeling of balance.
3. Be aware of the impact of the first view upon entering a building.
4. Create entrances that are open and visually clear and that direct you to your destination, whether to a living room, a reception desk, or an elevator.
5. Locate the public spaces of the residence or business in the front portion of the structure and the more private or intimate activities farthest from the entrance.
6. Avoid having columns and other protruding or blocking elements inside entrances, corridors, or rooms.
7. Create corridors that are wide enough for two people to pass one another without any sense of contact but not long enough to make you feel you are in a tunnel, which creates a sense of speed and pressure.
8. “Curve” straight corridors and features as much as possible with artwork, furniture, light sconces, and other architectural details.

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tool called the bagua—an octagonal overlay on a site or floor plan that corresponds to various aspects of the occupant's life such as relationships, career, health, and reputation.

Geomancy, a form of divination, is also often used to read the energy currents in the land to determine propitious siting for a building.

Brooklyn, N.Y., feng shui
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practice

consultant Alex Stark, an architect, blends both the practical and transcendental aspects in his practice. He says that although feng shui was introduced to America as a Chinese practice, here and in Europe it's been transformed into something more holistic. Many of his clients aren't interested in feng shui's Eastern aspects, but they are looking to include some physical and spiritual components that aren't accessible through normal design channels.

"A lot of residential clients are interested in green building and want

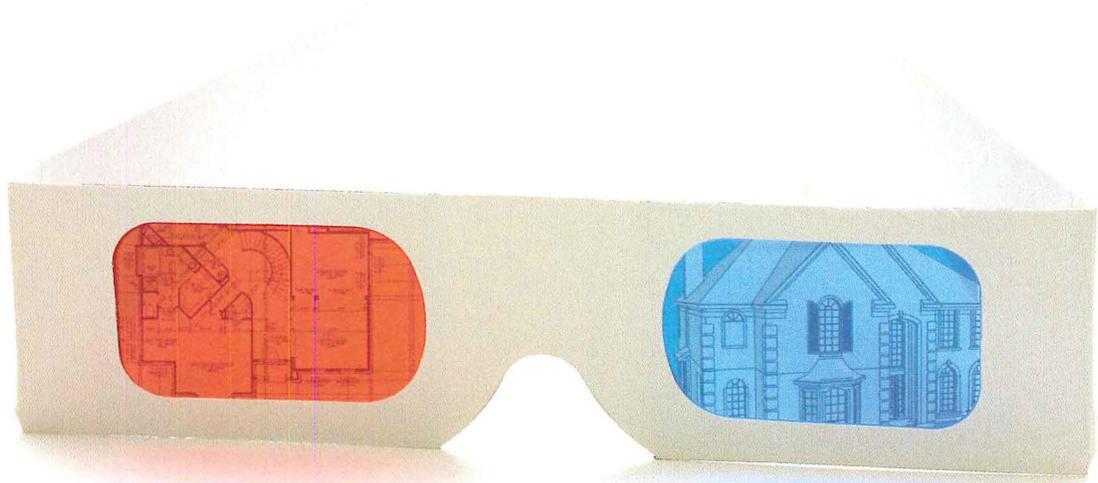
to provide the design process of their home with a greater understanding of how it should sit on the land," Stark says. "Whether they're just being respectful to the environment or true to practices like a mystical path, they feel that the home is a container of that type of spirituality."

For others on the spectrum, feng shui simply symbolizes an intangible sense of balance and well-being. Recognizing this consumer awareness, developers often use feng shui consultants to add value to their multifamily housing. Manhattan-based Tarragon

- 9. Use closed risers on all staircases.
 - 10. Do not plan doors or workstations at the end of long corridors.
 - 11. Provide right-handed doors wherever possible.
 - 12. Use natural and sustainable materials. From a feng shui perspective, these materials will create an environment that contains fewer toxins and is more balanced and comfortable. — *c.w.*
- Corp. recently hired Stark to feng shui a 15-story, 168-unit condominium project at One Hudson Park in Edgewater, N.J. "We realized we had the option of either doing or not doing his recommenda-

tions," says Hilary Thomas, vice president of Tarragon Development Corp., a Tarragon Corp. subsidiary. "We wanted to see how it would enhance our design, and we believe that it did."

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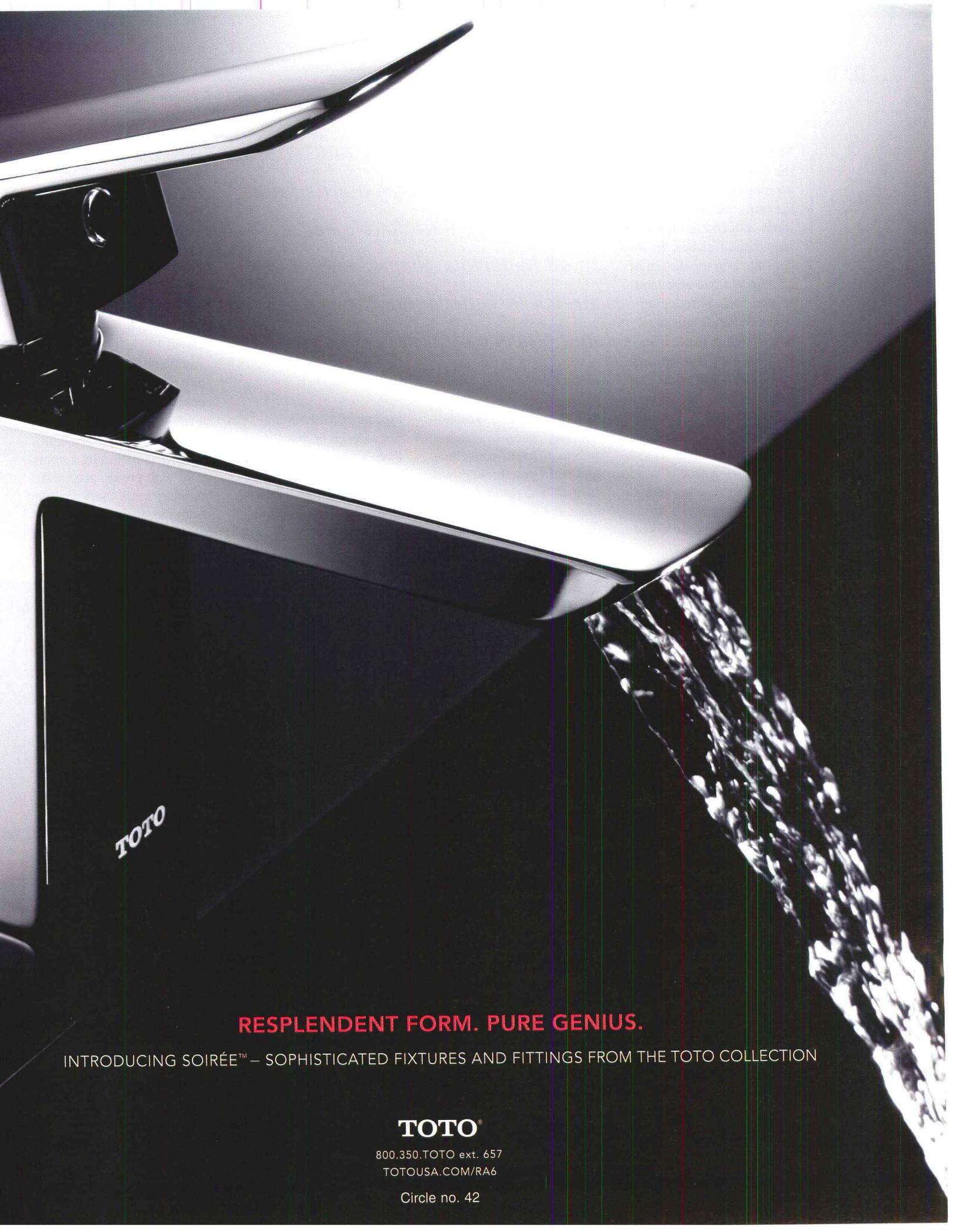
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Stark came aboard during the design phase to advise on room relationships in the units and to provide input concerning the lobby layout and finishes. He also consulted on the design of an adjacent one-acre landscaped park, introducing water elements and suggesting optimal site lines. He even did a numerology assessment—an effort that resulted in his suggestion that the developer not use the number “4” (hence no 4th or 14th floors).

At Trio—a second condo project in Palisades Park, N.J., in which Stark was involved—Tarragon asked

“feng shui is a practice that’s a little bit spiritual and takes a little faith. if you believe that there’s energy in all materials, then it’s not a big stretch to believe that the orientation and placement of materials can have an effect.” —james brew, aia

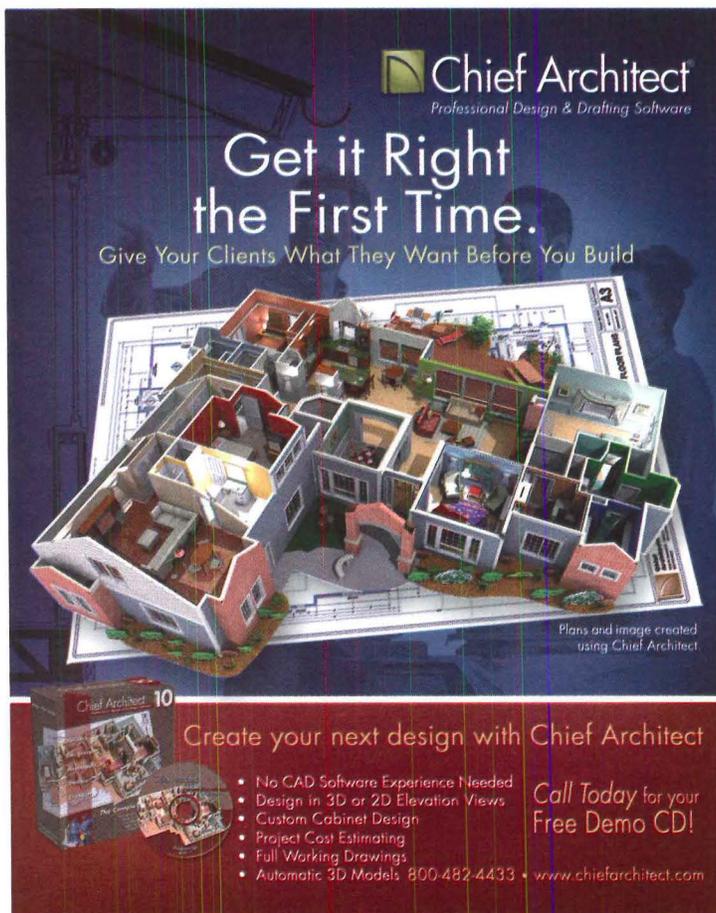
him to conduct a “ground-blessing” party to which public officials, consultants, and real estate brokers were invited. The developer also created a marketing piece describing the feng shui

aspects of the building. “I’m not a designer, but I’d say there’s a smoothness—a softness—to it,” Thomas says, adding that natural elements like water and stone lend a sense of calm

in the lobby. “We hope it will bring a peacefulness to the residents when they come home.”

Whether it’s distinctly marketable or not, designing for good feng shui is a logical approach in culturally rich urban areas. David Baker, FAIA, of David Baker + Partners, Architects, San Francisco, has taken an AIA Web course on the subject. As a result, he tries to invoke some basic siting principles—such as including a courtyard with green space and running water that’s visible from the street—in his

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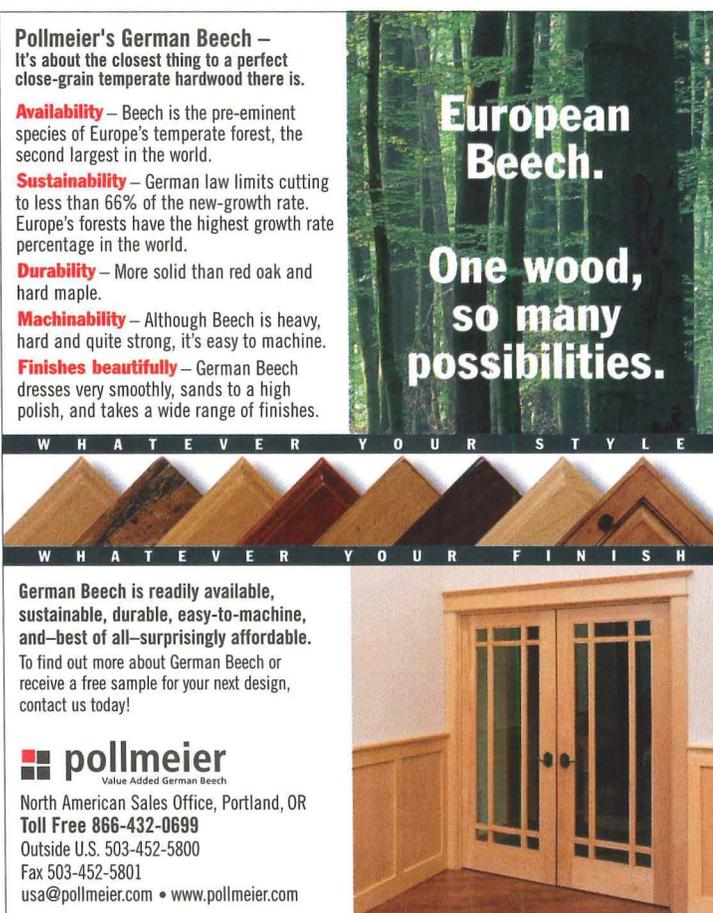
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“the terminology is different, but there’s a qualitative similarity between what i think makes people feel comfortable in a house and what feng shui is aiming to secure for a resident.” — sarah susanka, faia

multifamily projects. On a recent project located across the street from a cemetery, for example, Baker consulted a feng shui master on the site plan. “It’s a diverse community with a lot of Asian folks, so we wanted to address it,” he says. One of the elevations was facing the cemetery, but after consulting with the feng shui guru, Baker says he turned it away as much as he could.

When single-family clients request the input of a feng shui expert, many architects happily widen the consultant circle to include them. James Brew, AIA, a Duluth, Minn.-based architect with LHB, met Stark while doing LEED consulting on a \$60 million cancer center. When a client in Japan insisted on having an American feng shui master help to site a ski villa in Nagano, Japan, Brew turned to Stark.

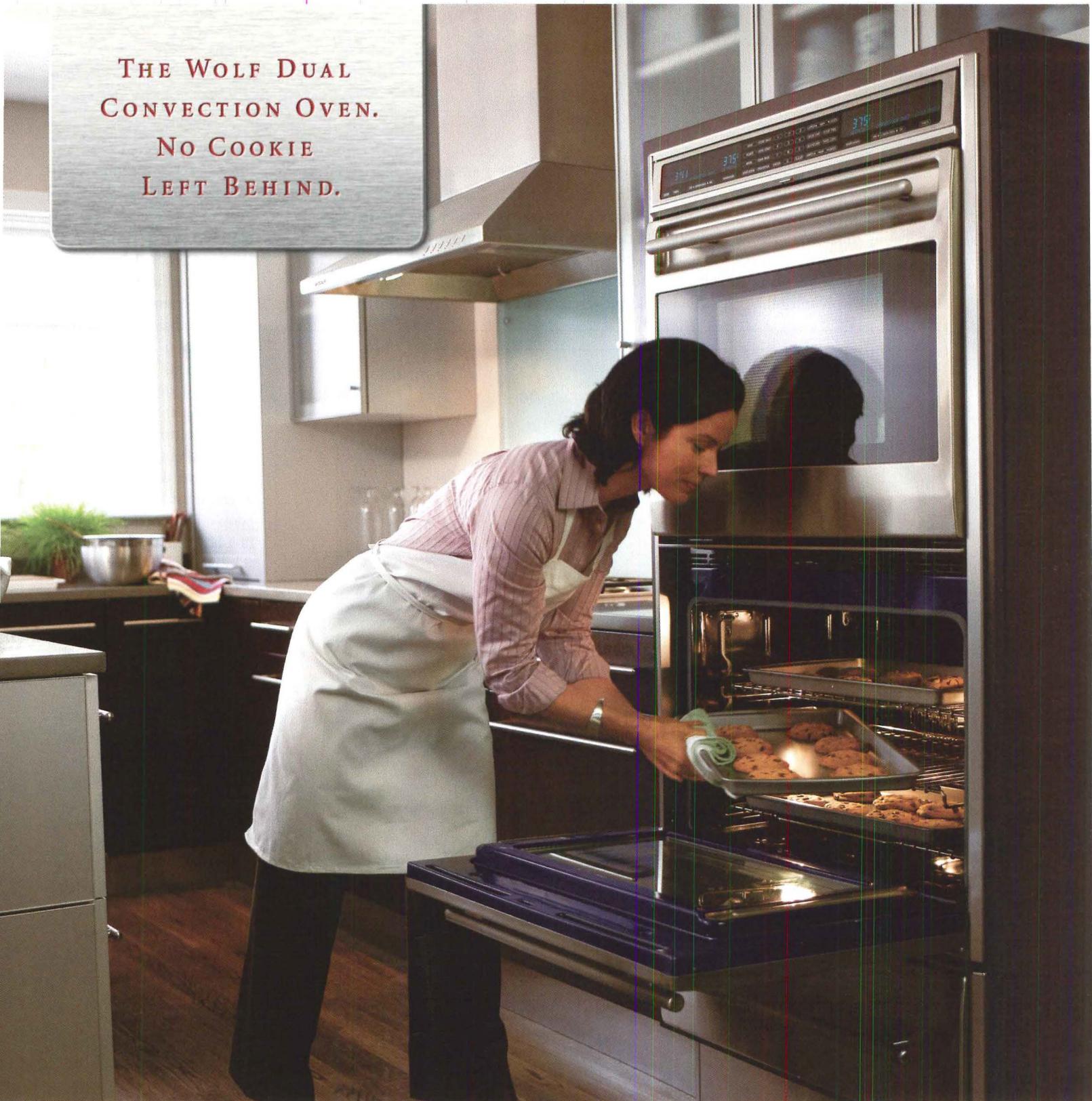
Because he was unable to come to Japan, Stark did his analysis using video footage of the site, a plat sketch, and a high-altitude aerial photo. Meanwhile, Brew spent two days surveying the wooded site, marking the location of twisted trees and boulders half the size of a car. Then he sketched the land to scale,

locating the footprint of the house. “I’m pushing for solar orientation and doing traditional wind and terrain analysis, trying to see if I can make everything work with Alex,” Brew recalls. When he laid Stark’s final to-scale sketch over his own survey, he was surprised to see that the consultant had drawn a ¼-inch-wide geopathic stress zone slashing through the site along the line of the boulders and had detected a ditch that fills with seasonal snow melt. “Japan has three seismic occurrences every day,” Brew says, “so we avoided the geopathic stress zone and pushed the house higher on the hill.”

By way of explanation, Stark says that this site was atypical in that stress zones usually aren’t reflected on the surface. In this case, he used a remote dousing technique in which the site plan is cut up into a grid and individual blocks are “doused” using a pendulum to pinpoint the location of water, mineral deposits, and rock formations. “It’s a standard check we do on all properties to see what’s underground,” he says.

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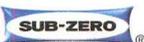
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While Brew wouldn't suggest that every client go this route, he doesn't mind educating those who are interested in learning more. "Feng shui is a practice that's a little bit spiritual

and takes a little faith," he explains. "In some respects, we've lost a bit of our connection to the earth. If you believe that there's energy in all materials—and I think science has proven that there

are protons and electrons in constant movement and that water is a strong element on Earth—then it's not a big stretch to believe that the orientation and placement of materials can have

an effect. I don't think it's super-mysterious."

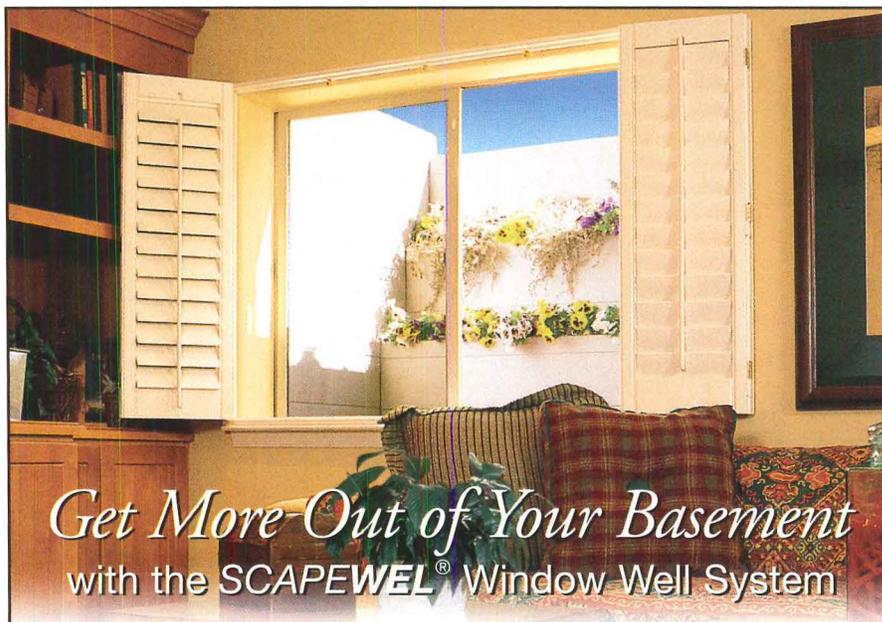
asian fusion

Without necessarily subscribing to the whole philosophical framework, many architects have come to believe in its benefits. And when clients request feng shui, they view it as just another design constraint.

"The terminology is different, but there's a qualitative similarity between what I think makes people feel comfortable in a house and what feng shui is aiming to secure for a resident," says Sarah Susanka, FAIA, Raleigh, N.C. A Vietnamese family once asked her to design a house based on good feng shui. Since Susanka was familiar with the principles, she had no trouble communicating with them. But when they began working with a consultant who was using the family members' birth dates to determine the most favorable direction for the front door and other elements, she says she told them, "You be the governors of that, because I don't know it."

Although the project never progressed beyond schematics, Susanka envisioned some potential conflicts. "I'm sure there would be situations where I might take issue with where a kitchen was being placed if they were missing the boat on an opportunity for views," she says. "We use a kitchen very differently than in the houses

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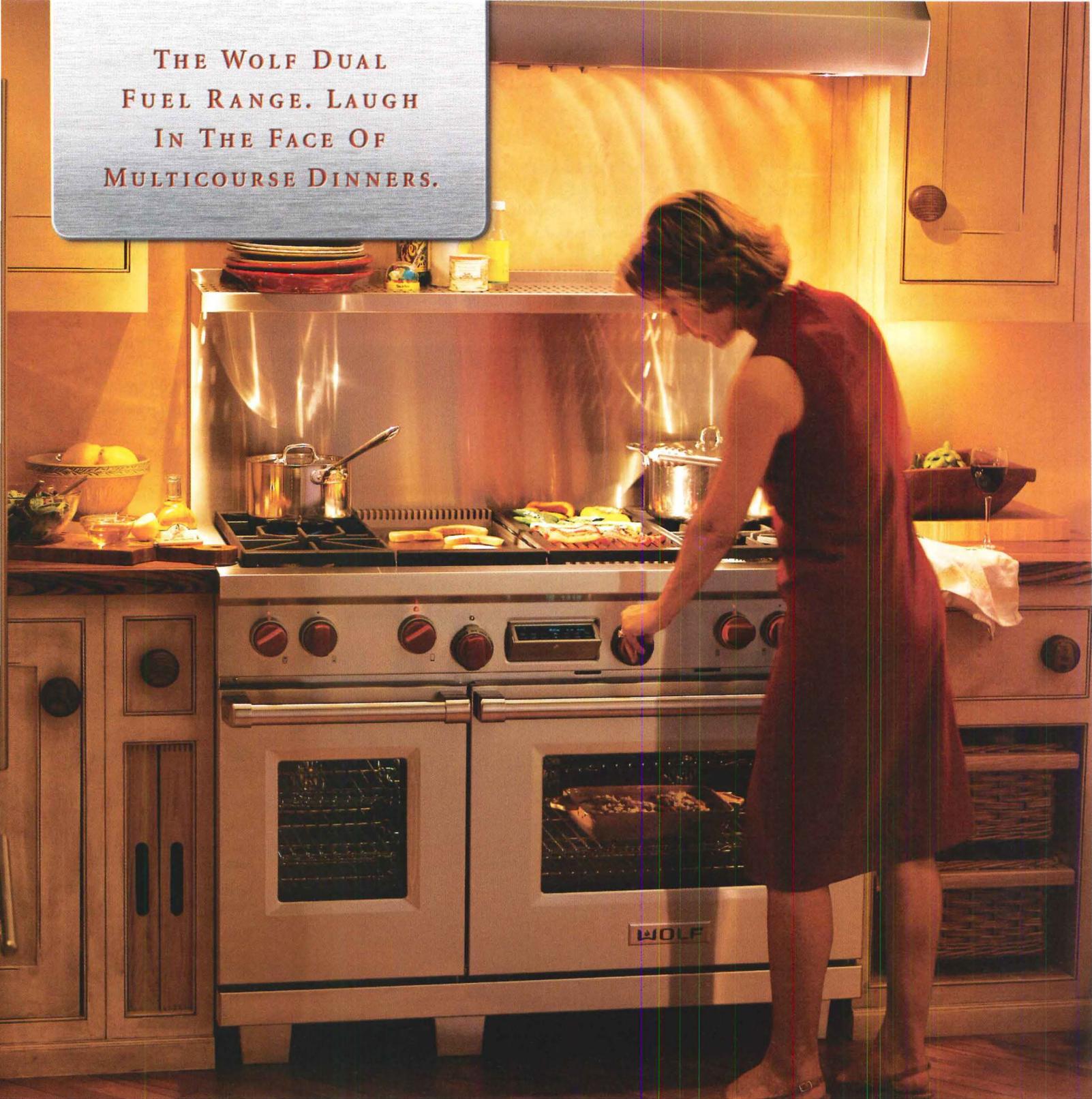
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that were defined by feng shui in the days of yore.” One feng shui no-no in the kitchen, for example, is to place fire (the range) and water (the sink) on the same wall. Susanka says

she would design around this idea, just like she accommodates clients with extensive art collections. However, she adds, “I’d ask how important this is to the client. Often architects

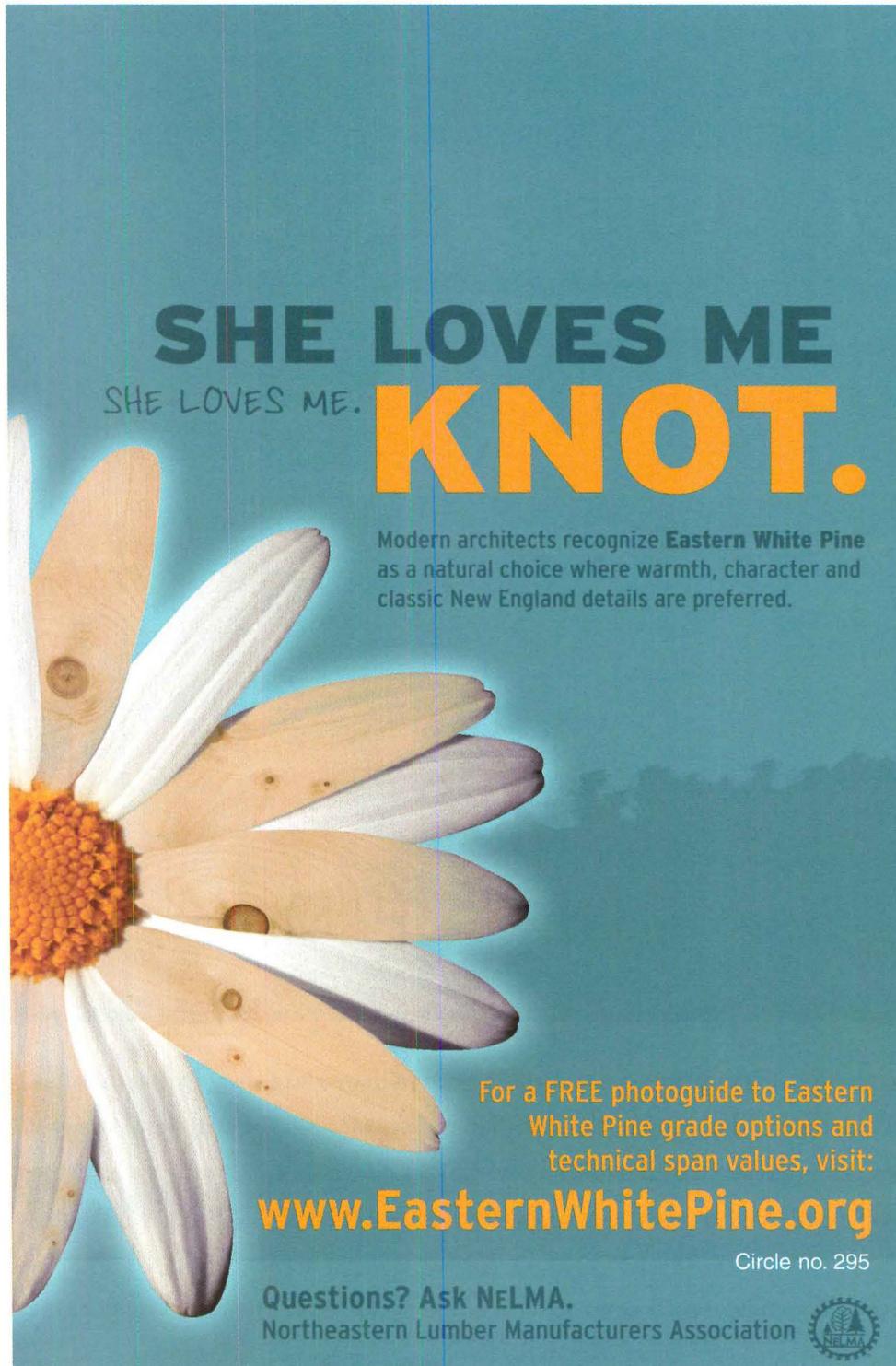
don’t realize that what the client is really looking for is someone who will steer the project in the right direction. People will believe things hook, line, and sinker because they

want the right answer. I’m trying to satisfy the client: that’s the point.”

Greg Watts, a project designer at Steven Conger Architects, Carbondale, Colo., has worked with feng shui consultants twice. Each time he says he learned things that made a lot of sense. And ultimately, it made for happy clients. On one project—a house oriented toward Mount Sopris, a sacred mountain in western Colorado—the feng shui master “clarified a lot of things in the clients’ minds about how they think and made them feel that they were doing the right thing,” Watts says. They were just as happy having a spiritual consultant, he adds, as they were having a mechanical engineer.

For architects like St. Paul, Minn.-based Margot Fehrenbacher, AIA, who began experimenting with feng shui 15 years ago, the discipline has had surprisingly powerful results. In fact, she uses it in every interior design she does—whether clients ask for it or not. “We’re awfully practical here; that’s why I don’t always say I’m using it,” she says.

Still, fundamentally, she views it as a good organizing element. “If you interpret feng shui’s principles correctly, the results are much more interesting than straight functionality,” she says. “It adds an element you can’t quite describe—comfortable, serene, nurturing—and as a residential architect, that’s what I’m after.” *ra*



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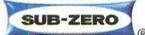
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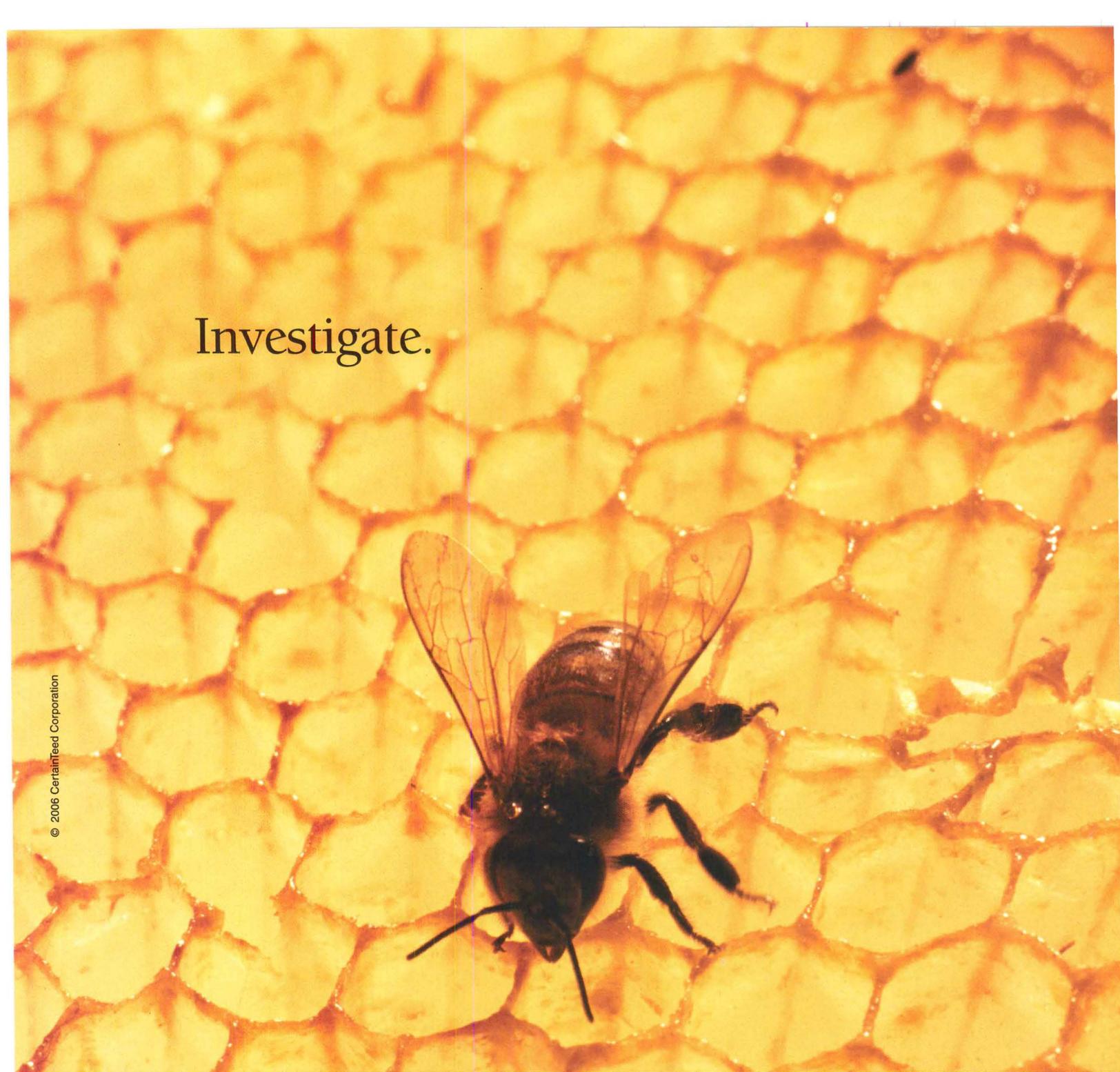
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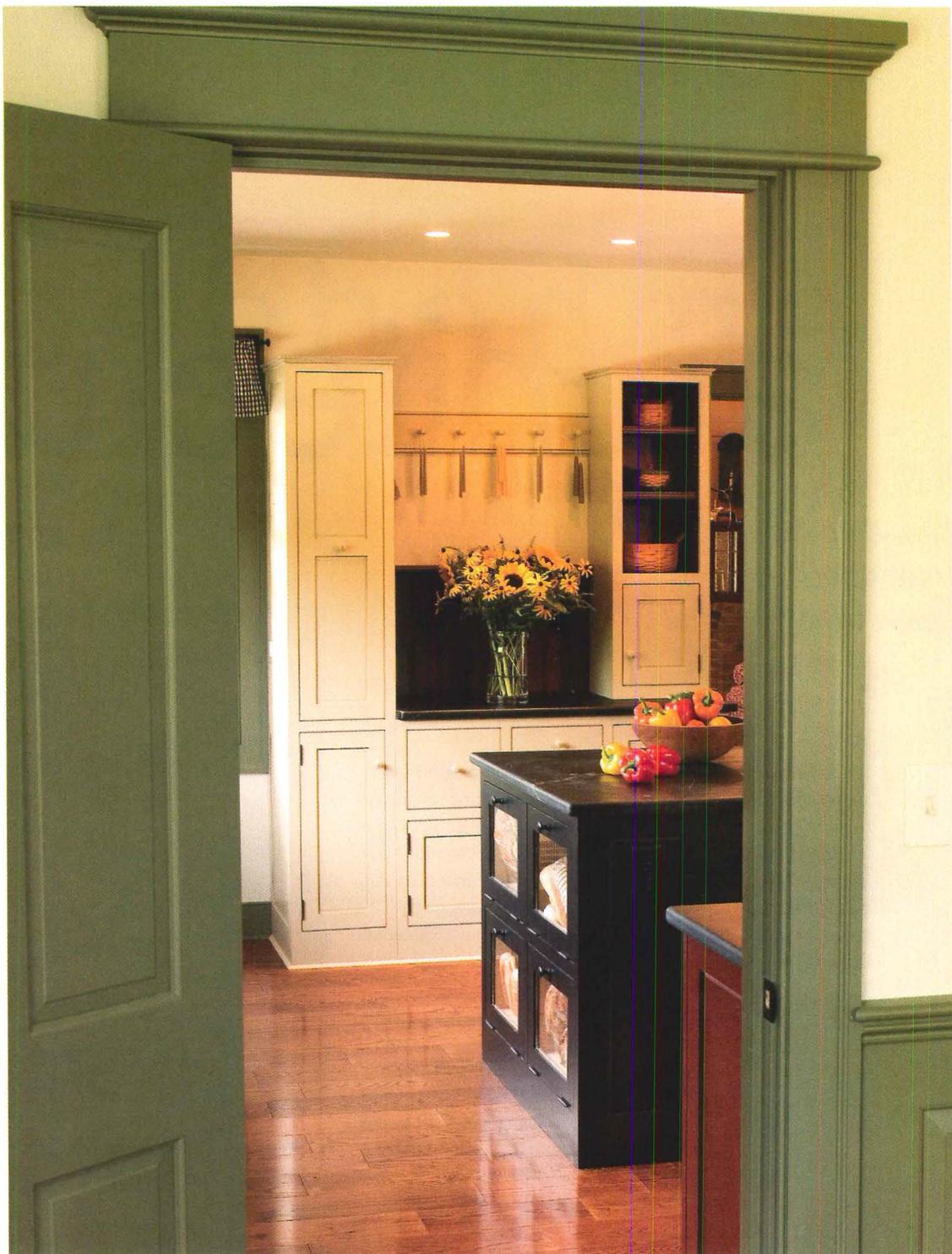
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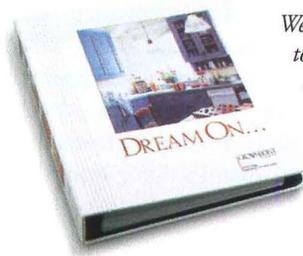


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embedded architecture

shim-sutcliffe's artful interventions tease the landscape from the land.

by cheryl weber

It seems that countries known for their vast natural landscapes produce architects with an extraordinary sensitivity to site. Think Australia's Glenn Murcutt, whose buildings sit lightly on their fragile ecosystems. Or Brian MacKay-Lyons, FAIA, who's known for plainspoken materials and forms that draw on the rural building traditions of his native Nova Scotia. Over the past decade, another Canadian firm—Shim-Sutcliffe Architects—has made a name for

itself by designing architecture that is on intimate terms with the land. Brigitte Shim, FRAIC, Int'l Assoc. AIA, and her husband, Howard Sutcliffe, MRAIC, live in Toronto—a multicultural city surrounded by rugged wilderness, where freshwater lakes fill basins gouged by glaciers that melted more than 10,000 years ago. These vivid backdrops set the stage for the dual themes that often converge in their work: the mythic and modernist, the rough-hewn and refined, the handmade and manufactured, the practical and poetic.

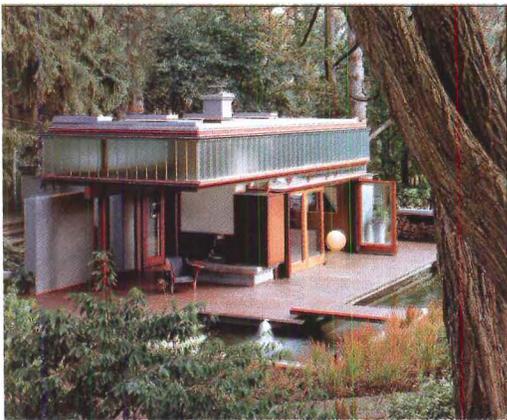
Since their earliest collaborations, the couple's work has attracted attention. One of their first joint projects, a pavilion and reflecting pool in north Toronto's Don Mills neighborhood, received a prestigious Governor General's Medal in Architecture—one of eight now in their collection. Other medal-worthy projects have included a remote boathouse/sleeping cabin they've dubbed a "wilderness hut," a steel-clad suburban house that seems to dissolve into the landscape, and two residences that are urban experiments in creating compact dwellings on Toronto's network of back alleys, or laneways. For all their variety, these residential projects share common traits—an appreciation for craft, the sculpting of a surrounding landscape, and a strong metaphorical and physical link to place.

"Many of the sites we start with are not that stunning," Shim says, "but by the end, the location of the house or what it's doing brings into focus what is already there and



Photos (above and left): Raimund Koch

For Howard Sutcliffe and Brigitte Shim, house and landscape often mirror the same idea. At the Ravine Guest House (above and left), an indoor-outdoor fireplace ties the interior to an open deck, and its operable fire-glass window transmits light between the two spaces. The roof floats on a band of structural glass channels, held within a steel frame hung from the roof by stainless steel cables.





At the L-shaped Weathering Steel House, a lily pool slips between the house's two wings, reflecting dappled light into the living and dining rooms, and then spills into a swimming pool on axis with the CN Tower that defines Toronto's skyline.

James Dow

embedded architecture

“because they’re interested in the way things are put together, they are able to make things that somehow have a direct quality about the material.” —brian carter



Sculptural cutouts reinforce the steel-clad house’s spatial organization. The lower stair landing terminates the pool’s axis (above, right). An inverted bay window drops a pool of light on the stairwell to the second floor (above, left), where the two windows help to form a bridge between the master bedroom and the children’s wing.



somehow transforms the site beyond what it was originally.” Their ideas about revealing the spirit of a place were partly inspired by the Group of Seven, a band of Toronto-based landscape painters who embarked on a painting tour of the northland in the early 1900s. In contrast to the prevailing taste for the soft, misty landscapes of old Europe, their work depicts the terrain as harsh, wild, and romantic. The artists are credited with helping Canadians discover the beauty of their own country, and in turn, ushering in a more modern self-concept for the new nation.

For Shim and Sutcliffe, it’s an intellectual idea that also raises practical questions about how things get built and the role of materials. “As much of the world becomes increasingly placeless, so we find that the particular characteristics of the natural landscape become more and more important,” they wrote in a published lecture given at the University of Michigan in 2001. “In Canada both the vastness of the actual landscape and its mythic qualities are part of the national psyche.”

globe-trotting

It happens that the architects came from very different landscapes, though they’ve lived in Canada for almost as long as they can remember. In fact, the trajectory of their early lives was uncannily parallel. Shim, 47, was born in Kingston, Jamaica, to parents who immigrated to Toronto when she was 6. Sutcliffe, 48, moved to a small town outside Toronto at age 7 from his birthplace in Yorkshire, England. Their paths converged at the University of Waterloo, where they met as freshmen and spent their formative education together, receiving degrees in environmental studies in 1981 and architecture in 1983. Growing up, Sutcliffe thought he would become an artist, but in retrospect, he says, “studying architecture seems like one of those casual decisions you made as a teenager that turned out to be the right thing to do.”

Traveling together during school and after graduation provided a design education that extended far beyond the classroom. “We traveled through Scandinavia, Italy, Hong Kong, parts of North America, and Spain, understanding how each country has had to simultaneously address these questions of both the vernacular architecture and Modernism,” Shim says. For Sutcliffe, this exposure was an extension of his childhood enthusiasms. His family had spent time outdoors exploring, and he liked making things—boats, paddles, sculptures, suits of armor. At age 12 he toured the cathedrals on a trip to England to visit relatives. “I thought it was quite profound,” he recalls. Later, a semester in Rome offered another epiphany. “Having grown up in small-town suburbia, seeing the layers of construction and deep history made me understand what the concept of city was about,” he says.

Shim, too, had a keen interest in both art and architecture, and early in her career she worked for architects who challenged her thinking. A stint in Arthur Erickson’s Vancouver office while participating in the University of Waterloo’s six-and-a-half year co-op program taught her how to integrate building and landscape using a modernist vocabulary. “His work on the West Coast was very different from work he’s done on the East Coast,” she observes. “It was much more particular and connected to the landscape.” Upon graduating, she signed on with Baird/Sampson Architects in Toronto and served as research assistant on George Baird’s book *The Space of Appearance*, a critique of Modernism and Post-Modernism over four decades.

Meanwhile, Sutcliffe’s first job as a fledgling architect took him to the Thom Partnership, headed by Ronald Thom in Toronto. He spent a year there before landing a job



Howard Sutcliffe

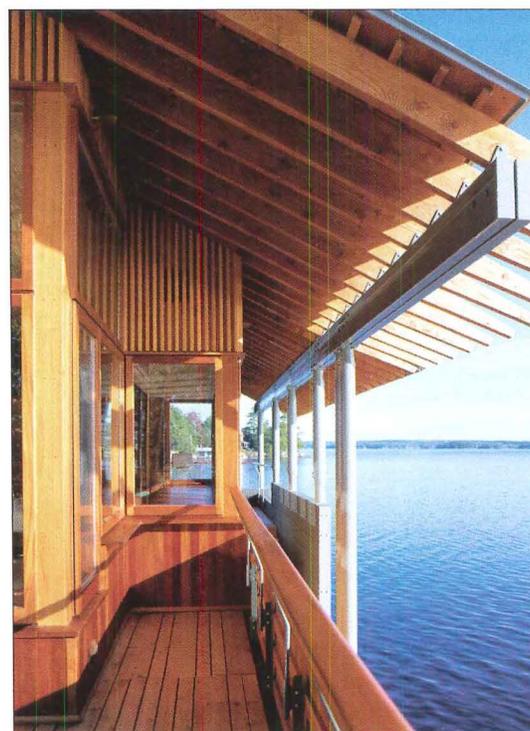
with Barton Myers, FAIA, an American architect who had moved to Toronto in 1968. Sutcliffe says the two firms exposed him to a broad range of architectural thinking. “Ron Thom was very much a kind of humanist and quite poetic,” he says. “Then going to Barton’s office was the antithesis of that—very cerebral and rigorous.” However, by 1984 Barton Myers had begun shifting the firm’s operations to Los Angeles, and in 1987 Sutcliffe transferred to Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB), also in Toronto.

As with many fresh-faced young graduates, Shim and Sutcliffe spent their post-university years accumulating a variety of experiences and following their restless intuitions. By 1986 Shim had left Baird/Sampson to devote time to her own explorations, and in 1988 she also accepted a faculty position at the University of Toronto, where she still teaches a design studio. All the while, the pair continued to collaborate on small-scale projects. They married in 1989, but it wasn’t until 1994, when Sutcliffe left KPMB, that they made their business partnership official.

material matters

Shim and Sutcliffe, along with four staff architects, work in an old garage in downtown Toronto that had been converted to photography studios. It’s a laboratory for turning out sketches and models, yes, but many aspects of their designs are also hammered out in the metal- and woodworking shops of Toronto’s talented fabricators. From the beginning, the Shim-Sutcliffe alliance has produced small-scale pieces such as furniture, hardware, mailboxes, and lighting; they use those objects as formal experiments in what specific materials can do and how those materials might be appropriate to a particular project or site. “We don’t say, ‘We want to use this material just because we like the look of it,’” Shim says. “It’s a series of longer experiments that lead you to an understanding of its properties and possibilities.”

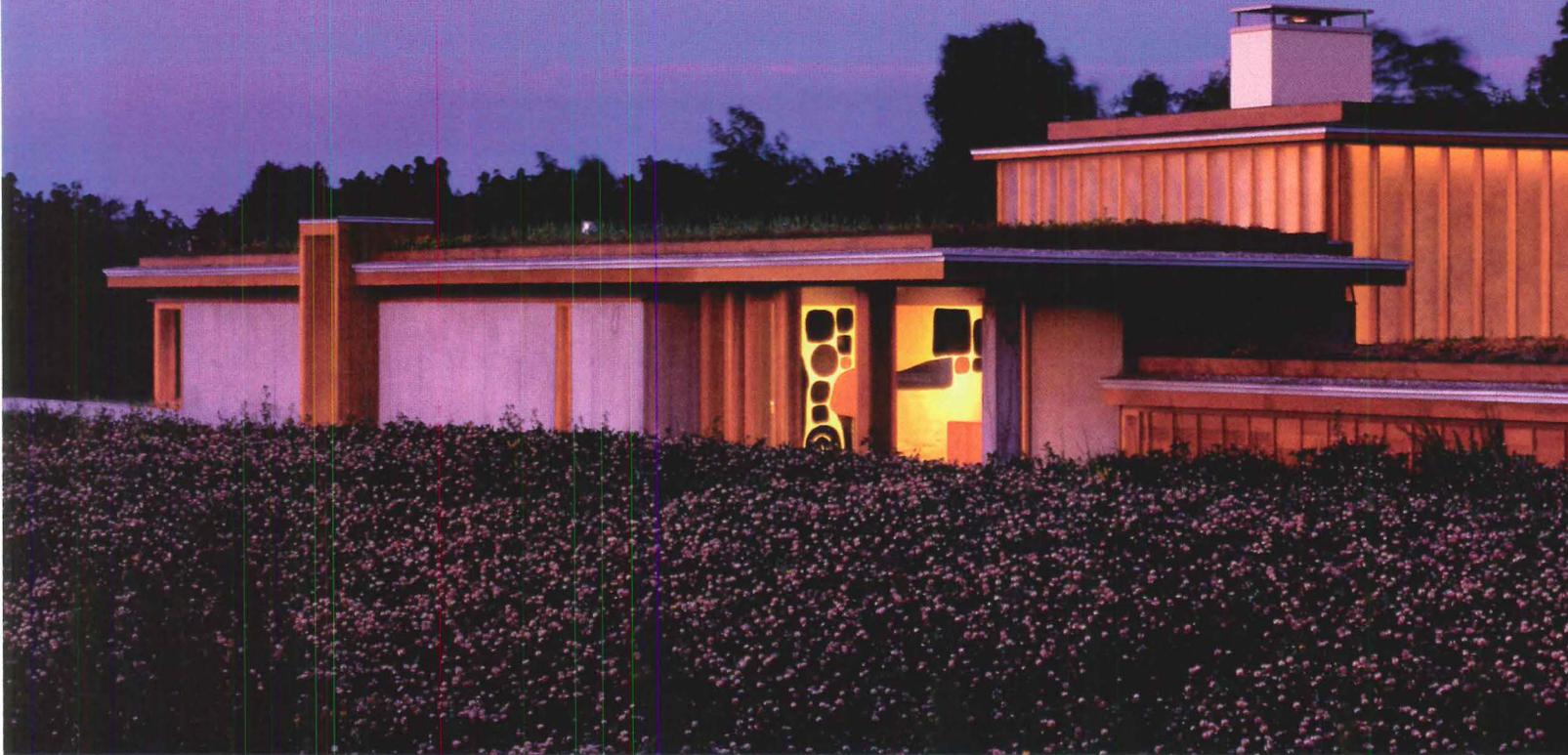
Follow their work over a period of time and, in fact, you’ll notice some of the same materials used and detailed in dramatically different ways. Their familiarity with weathering steel—originally developed for highway bridge construction—began with the



Photos (above and opposite): James Dow

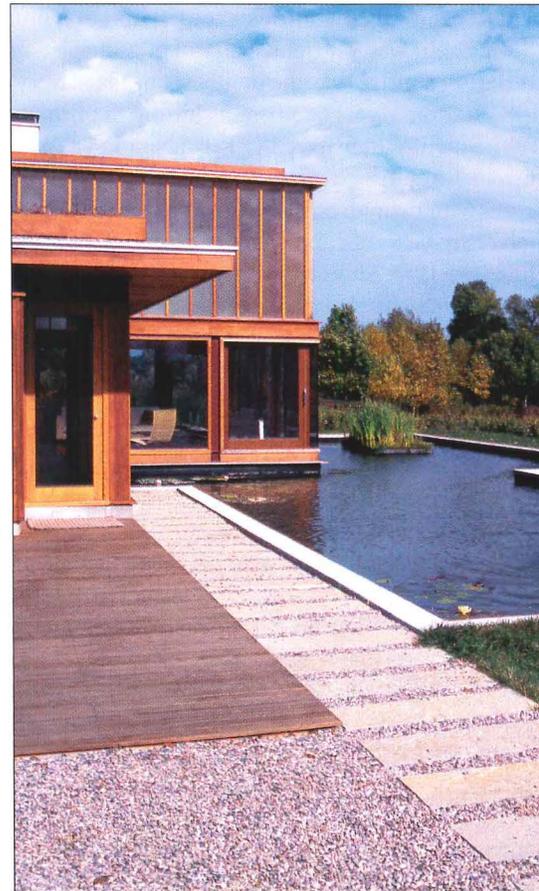
At the Muskoka Boathouse (above and top), porches and stairs occupy the layer between the finely crafted sleeping cabin and its outer skin of heavy timbers salvaged from a demolished warehouse.

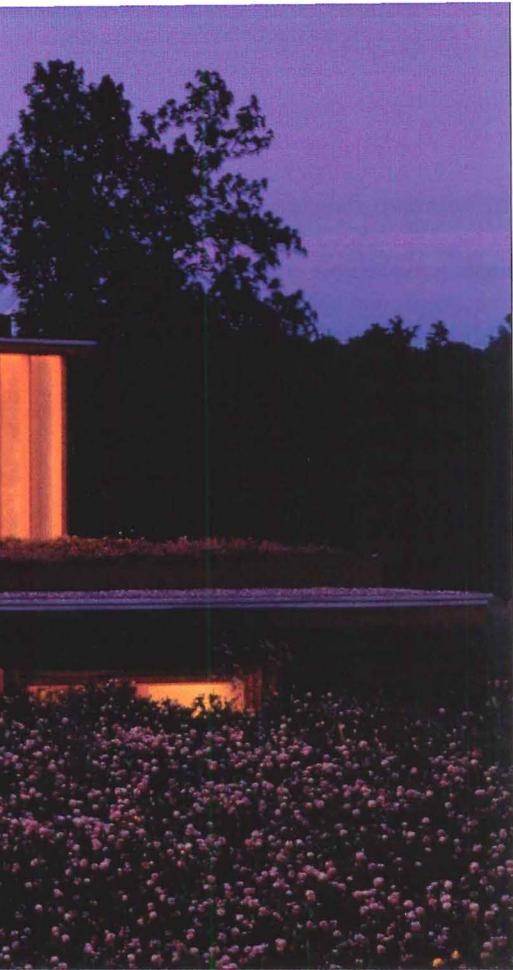
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Photos: James Dow

“water is something that connects us to nature in a different way; it reflects the sky and has different qualities throughout the day.” —brigitte shim, fraic, int’l assoc. aia





Limned in light, the Island House is tightly knitted with the landscape. Green roofs—the upper one a wildflower meadow, the lower one planted with sedum species—blend with the ground plane, which is mowed several times a year with a clover mix harvested by a local farmer. The lily pool (left) faces the St. Lawrence River.

fabrication of a table that was also a sundial. Later, they shaped a ton-and-a-half piece of steel into a flying roof for a garden pavilion. At Toronto's Ledbury Park, the steel is structural, supporting a footbridge that ice-skaters glide beneath. More recently, it's been used as cladding for a suburban house that backs onto a ravine. Constructed as a rainscreen, the panels are held away from a waterproof membrane on vertical channels that define recessed joints.

Shim and Sutcliffe like weathering steel because it's made with higher copper levels that react to impurities in the air, gradually taking on a rich leathery patina. "The idea is that it's always changing and is never static or inert," Shim says. At the steel-clad house, "it becomes part of the landscape of the ravine." Of course, the architects were also making a point about the use of honest materials in a context where Disneyesque architecture has become routine. "Within this pseudo-world of suburban buildings that look like stone chateaus and keystones that are made out of stucco, it's being clear about what is skin and what is structure and not trying to conflate the two," Shim says. "It's not an old building, but one of its time."

Sutcliffe makes a similar point: "At a profound level, we try to figure out what the real issues are, and sometimes that means being sympathetic to a tradition of building but exploring it with a new vocabulary." The Muskoka Boathouse—two hours north of Toronto on Lake Muskoka—replicates the 200-year-old construction culture of boats and marine buildings, but it's made modern with its proportions, spatial relationships, and refined inner layer. The project's contractors actually cut holes in the ice and sunk timber cribs filled with granite boulders onto the lake bottom to form the foundation. Heavy timbers also form the above-water outer walls that shelter three boat slips, and an inner sleeping cabin finished in mahogany and Douglas fir is as finely crafted as the inside of a yacht. "We think of the project as a sophisticated heavy overcoat—a heavy timber outer layer and more boatlike inner layer, and you move between the two layers," Shim explains. "As opposed to seeing it stylistically, we were looking at ways wood has traditionally been used in this area and trying to make it more evident and understandable."

Nearly every residential project includes the creation of furniture, and some of those pieces have made it into production. Two years ago the architects launched their HAB line—a table, chair, and bug lamp based on ones they designed for the Muskoka Boathouse. The chair, with wide arms that are ample enough for a laptop, is a modern interpretation of the rustic Adirondack chair. Brian Carter, dean of the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning, notes that Shim and Sutcliffe's careful consideration of how things are made translates to a directness in their architecture. "Because they're interested in the way things are put together, they are able to make things that somehow have a direct quality about the material, which has to do with designing things you could make yourself," he says.

This endless interest in materials and making beautiful connections is often shared with students, too. Carter recalls that as Martell Lecturers at the University at Buffalo last spring, Shim and Sutcliffe chose to showcase a house that was in the midst of construction, rather than a polished project. The *Integral House* exhibit included construction drawings, full-size pieces of handrail, and 12-foot-high glazing sections so the students could see the link between idea and detail. The architects also accompanied students on a visit to the construction site, and the contractor, client, and fabricators participated in a lecture they gave. "It's very unusual to have this in a school of architecture, but it's brilliant," Carter says. "Often those relationships can be adversarial, and it speaks to that collaborative dimension that's interesting about the way they work."

the lay of the land

New clients can expect to be invited into those multilevel explorations, too. People who come to the firm are usually architecturally savvy and have seen the built work,

architecture

The Rundles Restaurant and Tower House (below, left) in Stratford, Ontario, were designed as an urban ensemble contrasting with the buildings on either side. The renovated restaurant (the low building to the left of the Tower House) connects to the owner's three-story residence via a glass-ceilinged hallway and a shared monolithic concrete wall. Inside the house, a bay window overlooks the street (bottom). Interior spaces spiral upward around a central wood-framed "light court" (below, right).



Photos: James Dow

"our buildings are pure architecture but tied to a feeling of landscape. you need to move through them."
—howard sutcliffe, nraic

so they have some idea what it's about. In the studio, the partners and their staff work together to develop and refine ideas using hand sketches and large-scale models of both the site and building, which help clients grasp the big concept that knits the two together. "It's not like I talk one way to our clients and another way when I give a lecture," Shim says. "It's about the power of an idea, and many times building and site are mirrors of the same idea." Sutcliffe, too, describes their buildings as landscapelike, with a foreground, middle ground, vertical elements, and planned points of view. "They're pure architecture but tied to a feeling of landscape," he says. "You need to move through them."

Often, Shim-Sutcliffe's buildings are literally embedded in the land. At the Island House, a five-acre parcel with agrarian roots on the St. Lawrence River, the partners used a low, 200-foot-long concrete retaining wall to carve out space for a water garden around a glassy wing of the house. The entire property was seeded with a clover mix that blends with the house's planted roofs, and the reflecting pool—filled with indigenous water lilies and bulrushes—visually connects the house to the river.

Even from the time of their earliest projects, the architects have had an affinity for water. "We try to create a condition where water informs your understanding of a place," Shim says. "Water is something that connects us to nature in a different way; it reflects the sky and has different qualities throughout the day." They've used it in urban settings—as a centering device, for example, for their own house and tiny garden on a Toronto alleyway, where they live with their two sons, ages 9 and 12. In a city that grows by 100,000 people a year, this was an experiment in making something out of the city's underused, leftover pieces of property—creating density on a smaller scale. "It was important for us to commit to ideas we believe in," Sutcliffe says. To get the house built, the couple not only battled derelict site conditions—six abandoned cars, waist-high weeds, and difficult access—but nervous neighbors and city zoning ordinances that prohibit building a house behind a house with no street frontage.

After the Laneway House was completed in 1993, Shim and her students began to look more closely at the issue of building on laneways as an alternative to razing parts of the city for high-rises. She notes that many city houses have an existing stable or warehouse that could be converted for residential use. "The work we've been doing with students on laneways has created a different understanding of it at the planning level, and there are more and more precedents to work with," Shim says. Indeed, a masters-level studio she led at the University of Toronto resulted in the 2004 book *Site Unseen: Laneway Architecture & Urbanism in Toronto*.

High-value homes on pristine landscapes are the projects that often receive the widest publicity, but they're only part of the firm's range of work. A group of Catholic nuns recently hired Shim-Sutcliffe to design their living quarters in Toronto, and as the practice matures, the partners will continue to explore options for creating low-cost, sustainable urban housing. As an extension of the firm's wide-ranging intellectual curiosity, Shim is active on the lecture circuit, having taught courses at the Yale School of Architecture, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland. "Architecture is a pretty complicated business," Sutcliffe says. "Between the two of us, Brigitte and I cover a wide range of skills. Even though we have different backgrounds, we've developed a view of the world together." **ra**



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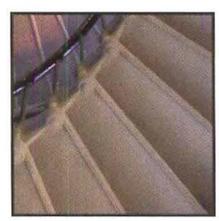
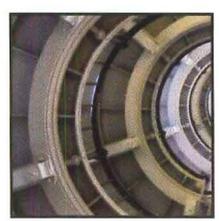
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Tom Kundig, FAIA, Olson Sundberg Kundig
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Kundig has developed a reputation for his highly inventive custom residential projects. His Delta Shelter cabin was recently named a 2006 Record House by Architectural Record and won a Grand Award in residential architect's 2006 design competition. He was also a finalist for the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum's 2005 National Design Award for architecture design. He's collected 18 AIA awards, including two recent national AIA Honor awards for The Brain and the Chicken Point Cabin. This fall, Princeton Architectural Press will release Tom Kundig: Houses.



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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Housing Tour*—5.0 CES Credits

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6:30 to 7:30 pm

Welcome Reception and Exhibition

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

7:30 to 8:45 am

Keynote Breakfast

No Limits*—1.0 CES Credit

Presenter: Tom Kundig, FAIA

Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects

For award-winning architect Tom Kundig, architecture and innovation are inseparable. In his jewel-box houses, the most mundane object is open to reinterpretation, rethinking, or complete reinvention. His work makes clear that there are no creative limits inherent in residential design, just an all-too-common tendency to stop before the work has really begun.

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9:00 to 10:30 am

General Sessions

Inside, Outside, and In-Between*—1.5 CES Credit

Good design doesn't stop at the front door. Learn how to integrate interior, landscape, and product design into your architecture practice.

Panelists:

Jennifer Luce, AIA—Luce et Studio

Whitney Sander—Sander Architects

10:30 to 10:45 am

Coffee Break

Questions? reinvention@hanleywood.com

No Limits: The Entrepreneurial Practice

10:45 am to 12:15 pm

General Sessions

Be the Master Architect*—1.5 CES Credits

Project development and design/build offer the promise of ultimate control over design quality. There are even some architects who've fulfilled that promise without losing their shirts.

Panelists:

Leo Marmol, AIA—Marmol Radziner and Associates
Kevin deFreitas, AIA—Kevin deFreitas Architects, AIA
Matthew Wells, AIA—Hanna Gabriel Wells Architects

12:15 to 2:15 pm

Awards Lunch

The 2006 *residential architect* Leadership Awards

Presenting the winners:

Wall of Fame:

Frank D. Welch, FAIA, Frank Welch & Associates

There's a branch of modernism that never forgot the human being or the sense of place that gives us our roots and intriguing diversity. Frank Welch has been practicing that kind of modernism in Texas for decades, making buildings that are at once timely and timeless. And along the way, he's inspired a whole breed of architects to design with a regional eye and a global sensibility.

Top Firm:

Dan Rockhill, Rockhill + Associates

Dan Rockhill is a first-rate, inventive architect with a thriving practice and a gifted teacher. At the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS, he guides his Studio 804 architecture students to think critically and practically about the problem of affordable housing. With the tools he's given them, his young idealists have found they really can change the world—house by well-designed house. A duo of modular houses from Rockhill and his class won *residential architect's* 2006 Project of the Year.

Rising Star:

Taal Safdie and Ricardo Rabines,
Safdie Rabines Architects

Why now we're all accustomed to the many hats so-called residential architects wear. The truth is, most practice and excel in a variety of building types. But how many are accomplished in the disciplines of both custom home and bridge design? Well, Safdie Rabines Architects is. For the wife-and-husband team, architecture is a bridge to the artful in every direction they explore.

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Come home to Andersen.

3:30 to 3:45 pm

Breakout Sessions

1) Teaching What You Do*—1.25 CES Credits

Leader: Mark McInturff, FAIA—McInturff Architects

2) Writing What You Know*—1.25 CES Credits

Leader: Jeremiah Eck, FAIA—Eck MacNeely Architects

3) Building What You Design*—1.25 CES Credits

Leader: Leo Marmol, AIA—Marmol Radziner and Associates

3:45 to 4:00 pm

Coffee Break

4:00 to 5:30 pm

Practice Made Perfect*—1.5 CES Credits

Is your business as successful and satisfying as your design work? Find some alternative models for managing your firm.

Panelists:

Dale Mulfinger, FAIA—SALA Architects
Taal Safdie—Safdie Rabines Architects
Frank D. Welch, FAIA—Frank Welch & Associates

5:30 to 7:00 pm

Reception

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

7:30 to 9:00 am

Breakfast Panel Discussion

Citizen Architect*—1.5 CES Credits

How can you give of yourself without giving up the store? Making pro bono, community service, and other good deeds work for your firm.

Panelists:

Duo Dickinson, AIA
Teddy Cruz—estudio teddy cruz
Dan Rockhill—Rockhill + Associates

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9:00 to 9:15 am

Coffee Break

9:15 to 12:15 pm

Design Charrette*—2.0 CES Credits

Do you have some ideas on the back burner for the perfect high-design infill development? Bring them to our annual design charrette. This year, we brainstorm with the infill pros the transformation of a missing-tooth urban lot into a dazzling, market-rate housing project. At registration, attendees will learn the design parameters and the names of their charrette team members. Seize any opportunity to communicate with teammates prior to the Friday session, where we'll divide into teams for the final brainstorm.

Sponsored By:



12:15 to 12:30 pm

Closing remarks. Conference adjourns

Speaker Book Corner

Pick up a copy of one of our speakers' latest books! Speakers are available between sessions for book signing.

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For More Information and to Register: www.ReinventionConf.com

REINVENTION SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS



Teddy Cruz, estudio teddy cruz, San Diego, CA

Cruz is known for his community-based nonprofit work focusing on housing and urban and social policy. He's a recipient of the Rome Prize in Architecture from the American Academy in Rome and the 2004-2005 James Stirling Prize. He is an associate professor of public culture and urbanism in the University of California, San Diego, Visual Arts Department.



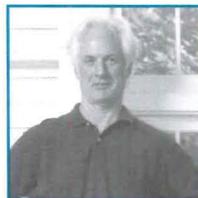
Kevin deFreitas, AIA, Kevin deFreitas Architects, AIA, San Diego, CA

DeFreitas is one of a cluster of San Diego architects who've invested talent and funds in the city's dynamic resurgence. He's collected national design awards and local accolades for high-density urban infill developments.



Duo Dickinson, AIA, Madison, CT

Dickinson is an award-winning residential architect who devotes a great deal of his practice's efforts to pro bono work. He's also a much-published author on home design subjects, with credits that include *The Small House, Expressive Details*, and the recent *The House You Build*. Dickinson is a co-founder of the Congress of Residential Architecture (CORA).



Jeremiah Eck, FAIA, Eck MacNeely Architects, Boston, MA

Eck is an award-winning architect, landscape painter, author, and a co-founder of CORA. Eck leads a series of professional development seminars on house design at Harvard. His recent book is *The Face of Home*, a sequel to *The Distinctive Home: A Vision of Timeless Design*; from the Taunton Press.



Jennifer Luce, AIA, Luce et Studio, San Diego, CA

The firm headed by Canadian-born architect Jennifer Luce emphasizes exploration in materials, research, new technologies, and the intersection of art and architecture. Accomplished in many building types, including residential, the firm has collected 12 awards from the AIA.



Leo Marmol, AIA, Marmol Radziner Associates, Los Angeles, CA

The design/build firm Marmol Radziner has several sensitive rehabilitations of mid-century modern masterworks. But the firm is also a first-rate designer of original houses and furnishings. Its latest enterprise is a line of sustainable prefabricated houses, based on Marmol's own desert home prototype. The firm received the California Council's 2004 Firm of the Year award.



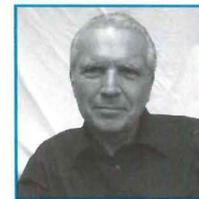
Mark McInturff, FAIA, McInturff Architects, Bethesda, MD

McInturff specializes in highly crafted residential, commercial, and institutional work. Since 1975, he's also taught at his alma mater, the University of Maryland, and from 1995 through 2004 at the Catholic University of America's School of Architecture and Planning. McInturff's firm has won 200 design awards, including three national AIA Honor Awards and *residential architect's* 2000 Project of the Year.



Dale Mulfinger, FAIA, SALA Architects, Minneapolis, MN

Through grassroots education, Mulfinger, a co-founder of Mulfinger, Susanka & Mahady (now SALA), helped build a market among the middle class for smaller, individually designed and crafted dwellings. Along the way, he fashioned a new business model combining the creativity and flexibility of the solo practice with the advantages of a large firm. Mulfinger is also the guru of cabinet design, with several books on the subject from The Taunton Press.



Dan Rockhill, Rockhill + Associates, Lawrence, KS

Recipient of *residential architect's* 2006 Top Firm award, Dan Rockhill is an inventive architect with a thriving practice and a gifted teacher. At the University of Kansas, he guides his Studio 804 students to think critically and practically about affordable housing. He and his class have won numerous accolades, including two national AIA Honor Awards and *residential architect's* 2006 Project of the Year. His new monograph *Designing & Building: Rockhill and Associates* from Tuns Press.

No Limits: The Entrepreneurial Practice



Taal Safdie, Safdie Rabines Architects, San Diego, CA

Safdie Rabines is *residential architect's* 2006 Rising Star winner. This wife-and-husband team leads a 13-person firm devoted to high-quality, site-sensitive, people-friendly design. Its portfolio is evenly distributed among custom residential projects and commercial, with a strong sideline in artful bridge design.



Whitney Sander, Sander Architects, Venice, CA

Sander's diverse firm practices both residential and commercial design. Drawn from a number of designs for custom clients, Sander launched a company to produce and distribute his own high-end decorative building products.



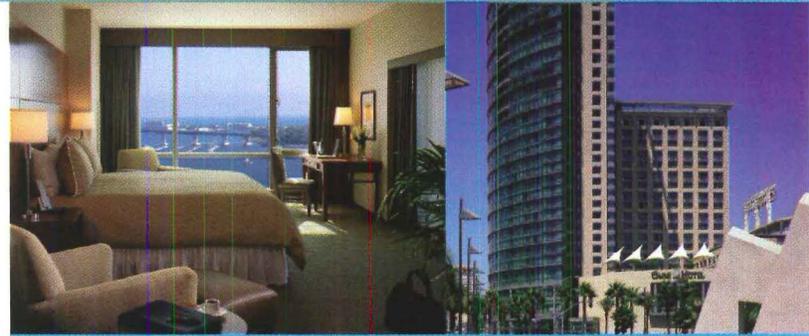
Frank D. Welch, FAIA, Frank Welch & Associates, Dallas, TX

Recipient of *residential architect's* 2006 Hall of Fame award, Welch has mastered a modernism respectful of human beings and our precious sense of place. During his years in Texas, he's inspired a whole breed of architects to design with a regional eye and a global sensibility. He's collected 52 awards from his AIA chapter and the Texas Society of Architects.



Matthew Wells, AIA, Hanna Gabriel Wells Architects, San Diego, CA

A diverse firm with a strong portfolio of high-end residences, Hanna Gabriel Wells is branching into developing its own modern subdivisions. Wells, a native San Diegan, lives in a house he designed in the firm's first venture, Cañonlands.



Accommodations

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Special Event

1:00 to 5:30 pm

Congress of Residential Architecture Trading Places

The Congress of Residential Architecture, an independent organization of residential practitioners, convenes immediately following Reinvention 2006. Join CORA as it hosts an open discussion on how architects and developers can work together to achieve the same goal: a better house for all Americans.

Moderated by NPR host Alex Chadwick and featuring some of the best-known house developers in the country, including the Toll Brothers, Ryland Homes, and John Wieland.

Separate registration required. Registration is FREE.

For more information about CORA and to register, please email info@corarchitecture.org or visit www.corarchitecture.org.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations have been reserved at the Omni San Diego Hotel at a discounted group rate of \$199 single/double per night. Reservations must be made by 5:00 PM on November 10, 2006. To book hotel reservations, please call the hotel directly at 1.800.THE.OMNI (843.6664). Attendees should identify themselves as part of the Reinvention Symposium to receive the discounted conference room rate. Attendees are responsible for their own hotel and travel accommodations.

DANCE POLICY

Dance at this event is reserved exclusively for architects and service providers who have paid a fee as official sponsors and/or exhibitors of this event. Hanley Wood reserves the right to review, accept and/or reject all registrations. If you plan to bring a guest, please note that they will be charged as an additional registrant if they attend the conference or activities.

REGISTRATION CANCELLATION POLICY

Registration cancellation must be made in writing and submitted to the Hanley Wood registration company via mail, fax, or e-mail. Cancellation requests received 31 days or more before the first day of the conference will receive a full refund minus a \$75 handling fee. Cancellation requests received on or within 30-22 days of the first day of the conference will be subject to a loss of 50% of the entire registration fee. Cancellation requests received within 3 weeks of the first day of the conference will be subject to a loss of 100% of the total registration fee; attendees are also responsible for one night's lodging at the event hotel. A confirmation of your registration will be sent in writing within two weeks of registering. Name changes are permitted at any time.

More Information and to Register: www.ReinventionConf.com

outside influences

around the world in four very different houses.



Sebastian Mariscal sited this Mexico home to harvest views of the vineyard, olive trees, and coastal mountains in the distance. An 18-inch-thick, 177-foot-long stone wall anchors the house and buffers against noise from a nearby road. A corrugated polycarbonate tower houses a guest room and studio.





by nigel f. maynard, shelley d. hutchins,
and meghan drueding

mexico / australia / sweden / spain

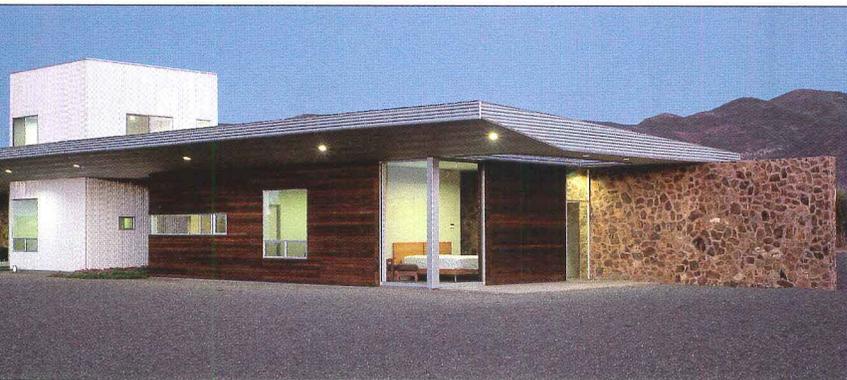
grape expectations

m

Mexico's Valle de Guadalupe wine region is no Bordeaux, but *The New York Times* reports the area's burgeoning boutique wineries and their complex varietals are attracting increasing numbers of visitors from the north. The area's temperate climate is another enticement for second-home seekers, including the ones who hired San Diego-based Sebastian Mariscal Studio to design this modernist family getaway.

The 3,400-square-foot home sits on one of seven lots—a subdivision of 25 acres bought by six friends (including the architect himself) as a vacation enclave. Two hours from San Diego and 13 miles from the Ensenada coast, the site was sweet in many ways. “The climate is similar to San Diego but a bit warmer in the summer,” says the Mexico City-born Mariscal. A grove of olive trees, a vineyard, and views of the mountains add to the appeal.

In Mariscal's view, a vacation home should be what an urban home is not, so his goal was to create a house in stark contrast to his usual dense city fare. “In urban living you mostly stay inside, so I wanted to create the opposite,” he explains. “I wanted to create several smaller rooms that must be accessed by going outside.”



outside influences

mexico / australia / sweden / spain

Mariscal started with a masonry wall and located the living spaces, bedrooms, and decks around it. A water element splits the house and separates the public spaces from the private. "The pool runs into the house and becomes a border," he says. "You cross a bridge over the pool to get to the bedrooms." A large overhanging roof moderates temperatures that can reach 100 degrees during the day. Instead of a defined entry, disappearing sliding doors create a series of large openings that frame the vineyard and the views. "When people are thinking about approaching the house, they just enter at any point," Mariscal says. Further blurring the distinction between inside and outside, the house's concrete flooring continues outdoors and a corrugated metal ceiling is used throughout.

A diversity of materials give the home its character. The tower containing the guest room, studio, and roof deck is clad in plastic panels; ipe lines the bedroom walls; and the kitchen cabinets are white oak and walnut. "Each volume has its own material, so each room has its own personality," Mariscal explains.

The owners are so happy with their new home that they make the trip from San Diego almost every weekend. Here, they find respite from urban life—a place to relax with a glass of local wine and to watch the children play outdoors. No wonder they call it the "exterior living" house.—*n.f.m.*

project:

Valle House, Baja California, Mexico

architect/general contractor:

Sebastian Mariscal Studio, San Diego

structural engineer:

Omar Mobayed, Mobayed Consulting Group, San Diego

project size:

3,400 square feet

site size:

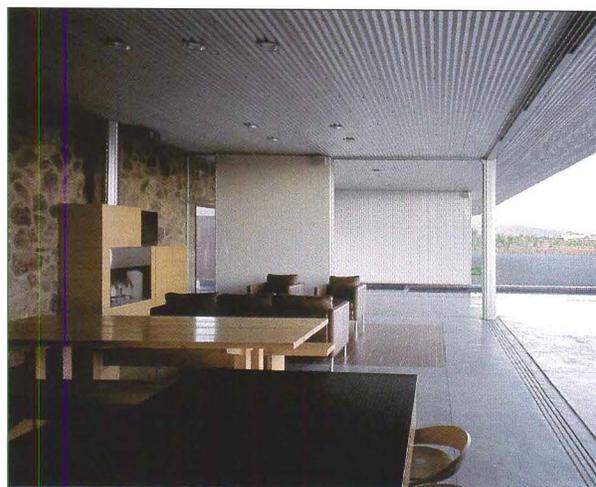
3.7 acres

construction cost:

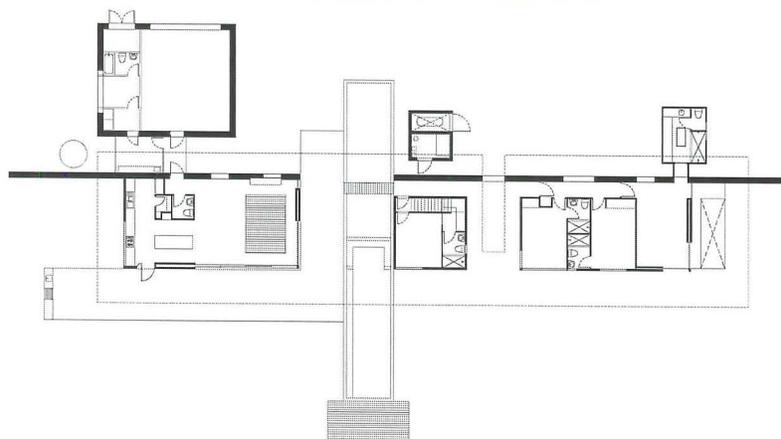
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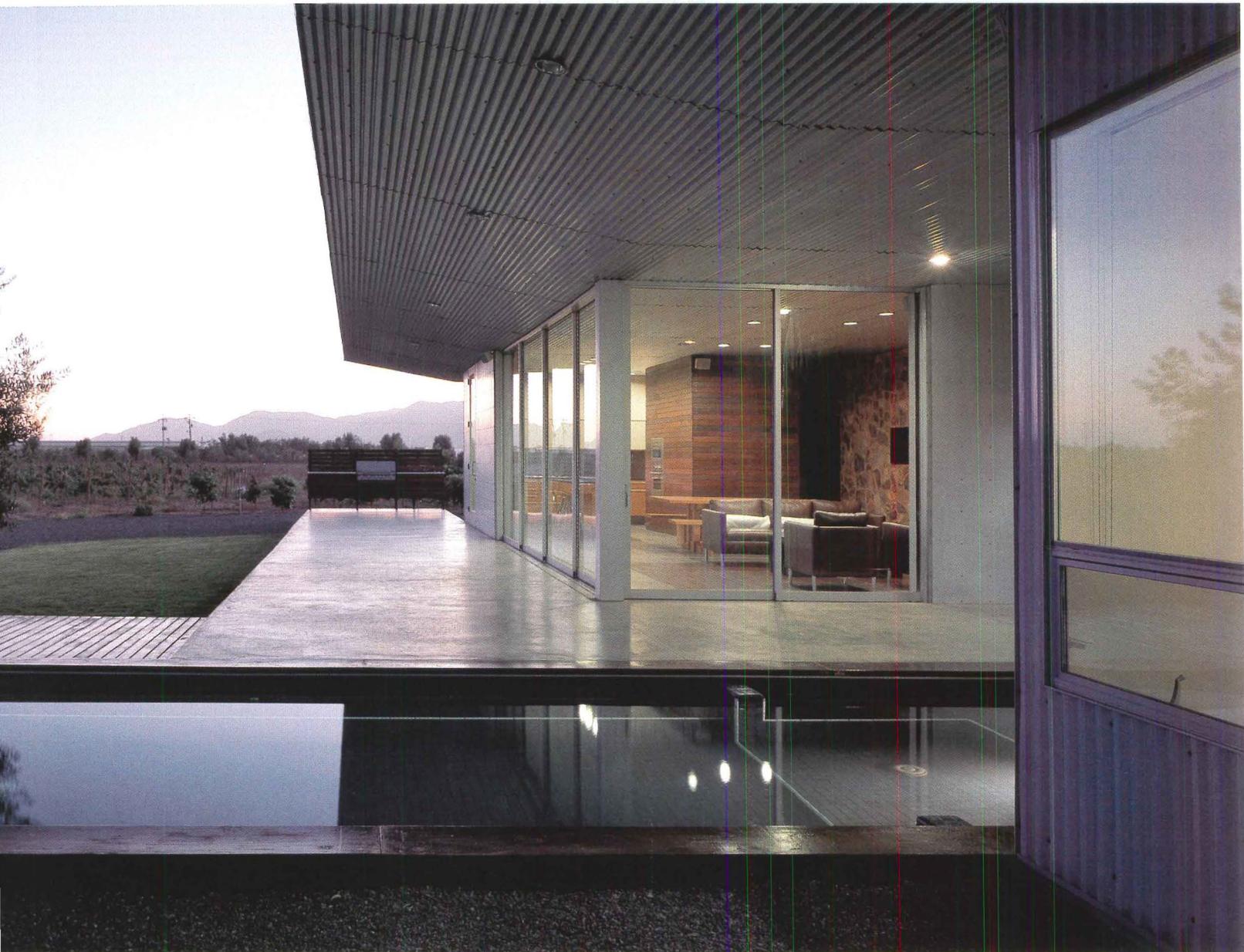
photography:

Hisao Suzuki, except where noted



The exterior-focused house consists largely of volumes that residents must access by going outside. Water in a reflecting pool, a whirlpool, and a swimming pool separates the private and public areas. A small bridge (above) connects the two spaces.





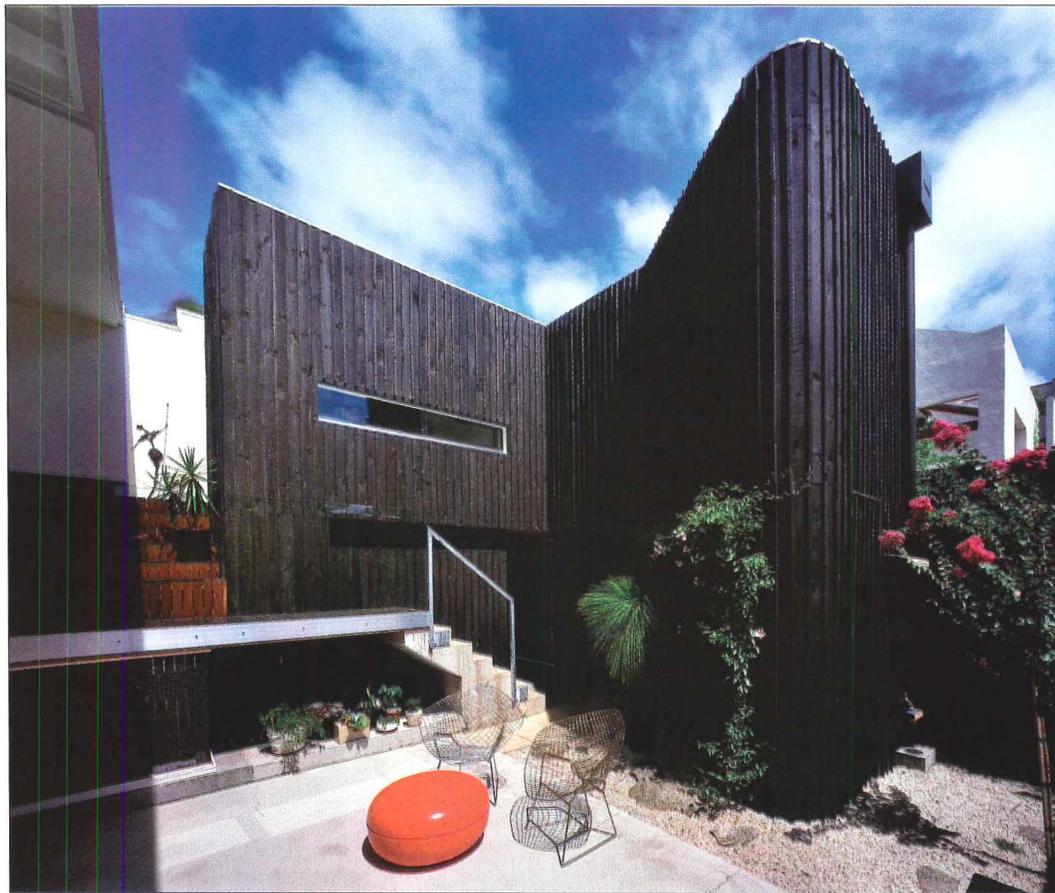
Photos (above and left): Roberto Zeballos

Mariscal rejected a formal entry in favor of 24-foot-long glass pocket doors to open the house to the outside. A corrugated zinc-aluminum roof tops the warm, light-filled interiors; its large overhangs provide shade for the deck area and pool (top).

watership down under

A mixed bag of buildings surrounds the quaint, yet unexceptional, bungalow that architect David Boyle was hired to renovate. Located in a largely industrial area just south of downtown Sydney, Australia, the house lacked the qualities that would make it an obvious candidate for preservation, but the architect and his clients decided to retain it nonetheless. It was part of the area's history, after all, and it made good environmental and fiscal sense to improve upon what was already there. "While the existing dwelling doesn't hold any particular heritage significance, it did make a positive contribution to the varied streetscape of terraces, warehouses, and freestanding bungalows typical to this inner-city suburb," Boyle explains.

After deciding to convert the existing structure into bedrooms, Boyle looked to the sloping backyard to fulfill the homeowners' request for "wow factor" indoor-outdoor living areas and a light, modern aesthetic. "The stepped floor levels of the new work take advantage of the sloping site and ensure a direct relationship between the indoor and outdoor spaces," he says of the





Gossamer walls thinly veil the protected courtyard just beyond the house's colorful living area.

outside influences

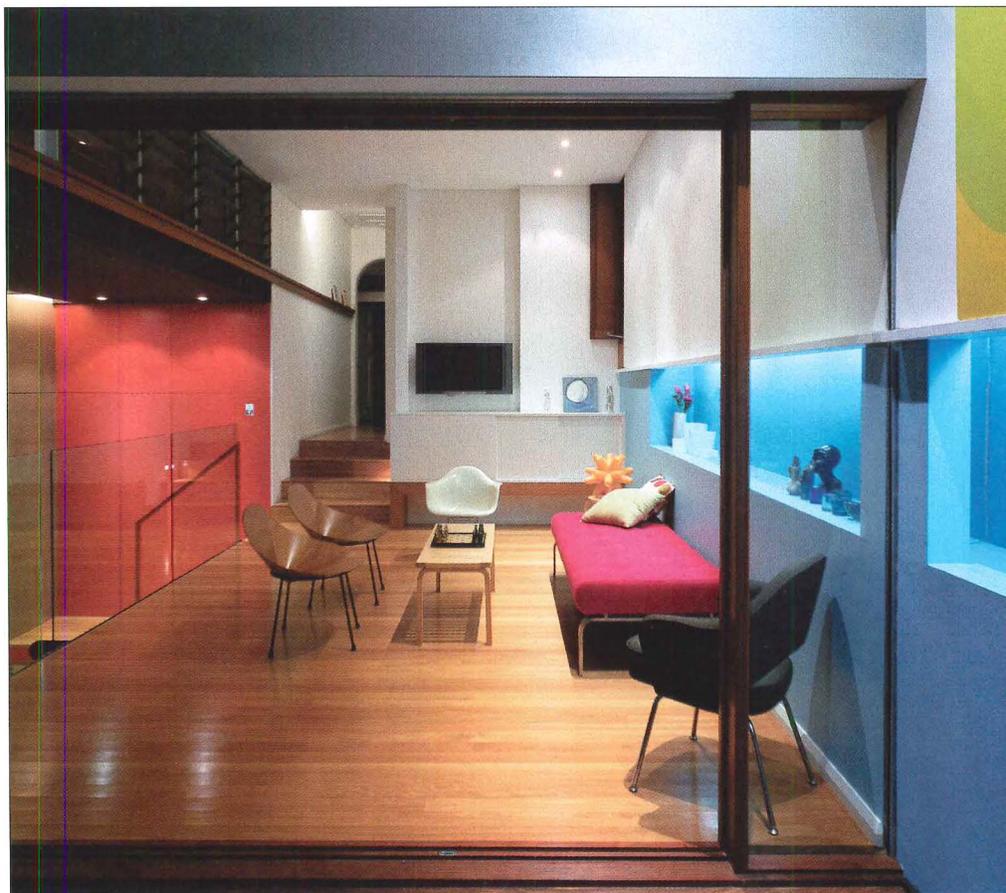
mexico / australia / sweden / spain

addition he designed. A contained outdoor courtyard, meanwhile, controls “the visual and environmental climate of the new work.”

The living room sits a few steps above the kitchen/dining space, and both public areas segue directly out to their exterior counterparts. Rather than blur indoor-outdoor lines, Boyle made them disappear altogether with steel supports encasing floor-to-ceiling frameless glass. A flat roof at the site’s highest plane turns into a shade-producing canopy, and the soaring ceiling’s high glazing over the dining room “allows the living area to achieve northern sun even though it’s located on the southern side,” he says.

An amorphously L-shaped, two-story garage and studio mitigate views of the warehouse-cum-condo building across the street and prevent curious neighbors from peeking into the un-private house. With the existing house and addition completing the U-shaped building footprint, only the northern exposure of the courtyard remains open.

Along with the human spaces, the clients’ program required a cool place for their pet bunnies. Not wanting the hutch to be an afterthought, Boyle designed the addition’s elevated living room floor to extend into the courtyard as a covered deck. The deck provides access to the raised studio space and protection for the spacious screened hutch nestled securely underneath it. In the end, it seems, *all* of the home’s inhabitants benefited from Boyle’s multilevel thinking. —*s.d.h.*



project:

Belmont Street Residence, Alexandria, Australia

architect:

David Boyle Architect, Pretty Beach, Australia

general contractor:

Jason Boyle Constructions, Sydney, Australia

structural engineer:

Patterson Britton & Partners, Sydney

project size:

1,722 square feet

site size:

0.07 acre

construction cost:

Withheld

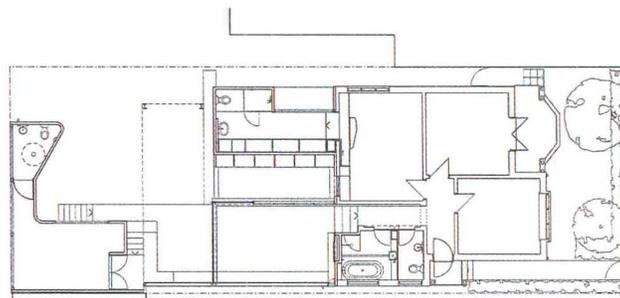
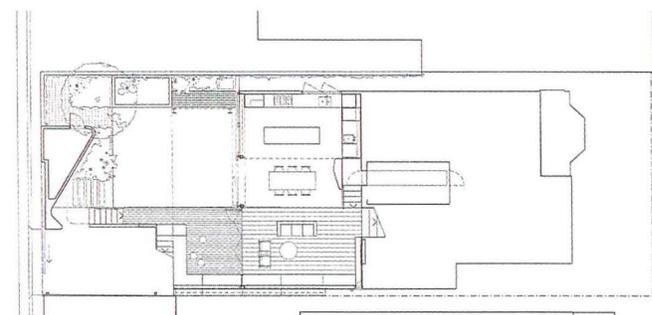
photography:

Murray Fredericks





Touches of color both inside and out help temper the bright Aussie sun and inject a bit of whimsy to this sleek renovation.



lower level

upper level

Cutaway light boxes, including the pale blue storage shelves in the living room (opposite, top) and the recessed clerestories in the bath (opposite, bottom), glow with natural and artificial illumination. Boyle used these "elements of extended spatial perception" to add depth and texture to the open spaces.



The architects united house and rock, sinking the building right into its site. A wall of double-insulated glass in the lounge area (above) rises out of a seam-drilled slot, letting boulders spill into the space.



outside influences

mexico / australia / sweden / spain



school of rock

American architects aren't the only ones who face tough design review boards. Sweden's Gert Wingårdh can attest to that. "The site was governed by some very strict rules," he says of the seaside house he created for two pharmaceutical executives in Göteborg, on the country's western coast. Local ordinances cap all new houses at just one story and forbid roof pitches higher than 7 over 12. Although these stipulations achieve a noble result—preserving water views for all residents—they can make satisfying the client's program all the more challenging.

Fortunately for Wingårdh's clients, he and colleagues Karin Wingårdh, Danuta Nielsen, and Joakim Lyth found a way to make the project work within the community's guidelines. They did it by blasting out part of the rocky, sloped site and embedding the house into centuries-old layers of granite. Because the craggy, cottage-dotted landscape stretches out to the north, east, and south, they designed a V-shaped floor plan for sight lines in every direction. "The plan was dictated by the site, by where the nice views are and to avoid disturbing the views from other houses," Wingårdh says. By nestling the open end of the "V" into the hillside and tapering the rooflines according to the slope of the land,



outside influences

mexico / australia / sweden / spain

they eked out enough vertical space for three stories—a top-floor office loft, a main level, and a below-grade bedroom level. Nowhere on the site does the home rise more than one floor above the ground level at that particular spot, so technically the project conforms to the single-story requirement. “It was sort of bending the rules,” Gert Wingårdh admits. Their maneuverings also led to the home’s most striking feature: the naturally occurring walls of rock that penetrate the master bathroom and lounge.

Such a rugged setting required an equally strong structure, so Wingårdh chose concrete for the house’s frame. Lightweight, water-tight foam glass insulation retains heat during the frigid Swedish winters, and a coat of plaster over it provides extra durability. Pre-patinated velvety black copper shingles clad the building. A ring of crushed limestone surrounds the foundation to neutralize any copper ions contained in the runoff from rain and snowstorms. Inside, radiant heat keeps the locally grown ash floors toasty, and carefully placed windows let precious sunlight pierce deep into each room.

As head of a 112-person firm with offices in Stockholm, Sweden, and Göteborg, Wingårdh doesn’t always have the time to focus on custom houses during regular business hours, so he designed this one over a series of weekends and vacations. “I like to have one villa I can focus on every year,” he says of his moonlighting. “I do it because it’s interesting to me.”—*m.d.*

project:

Villa Astrid, Göteborg, Sweden

architect:

Wingårdh Architects, Göteborg

general contractor:

Bergman & Höök, Göteborg

structural engineer:

FB Engineering, Göteborg

landscape architect:

NOD, Stockholm, Sweden

project size:

4,090 square feet

site size:

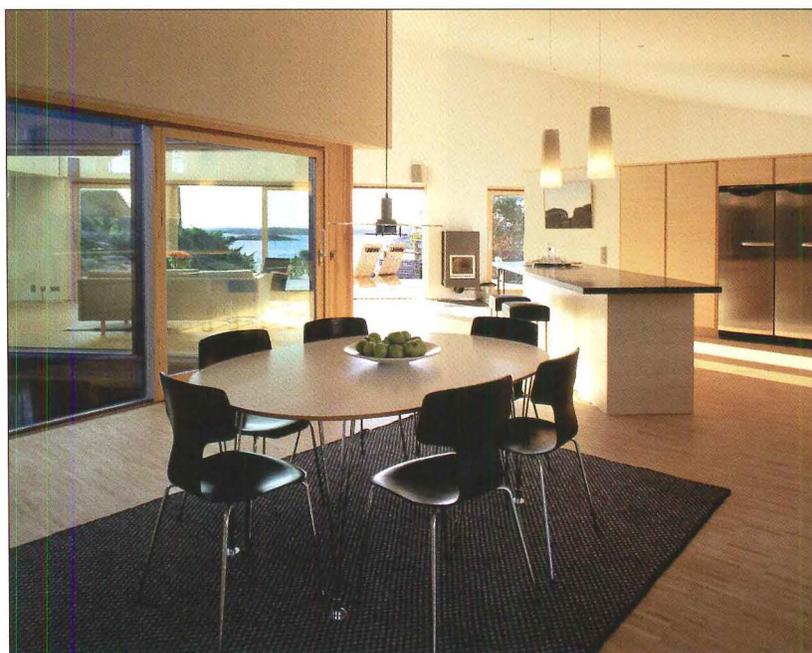
0.2 acre

construction cost:

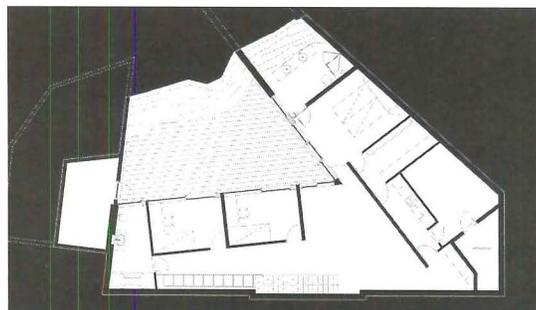
\$339 per square foot

photography:

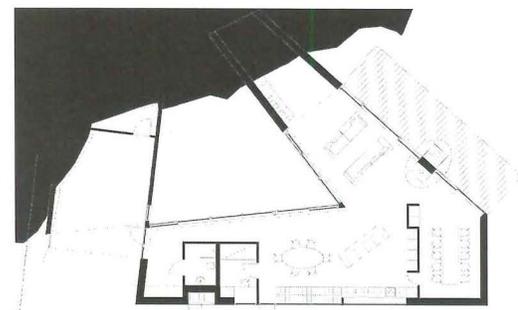
James Silverman



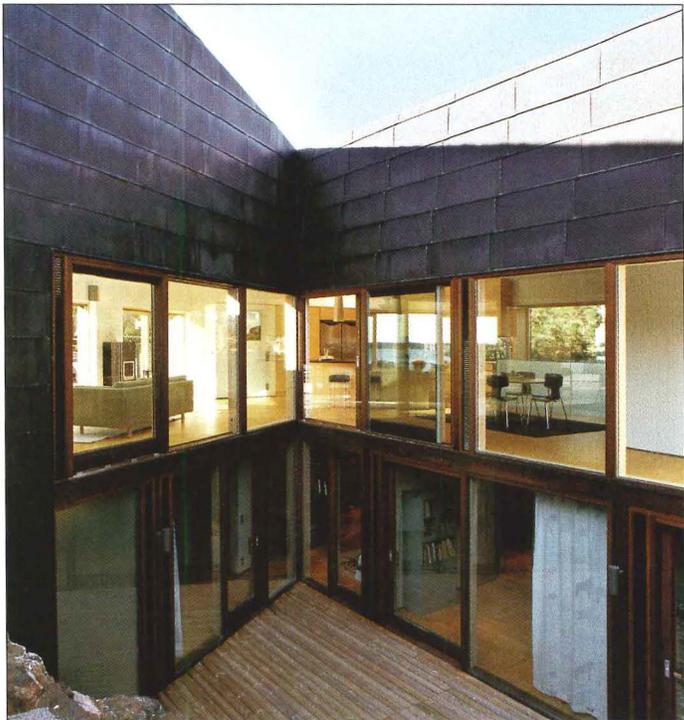
Sight lines from the interiors connect the house to the outdoors. Even the translucent plastic staircase wall (left) allows views of the sea and the rock-strewn landscape.



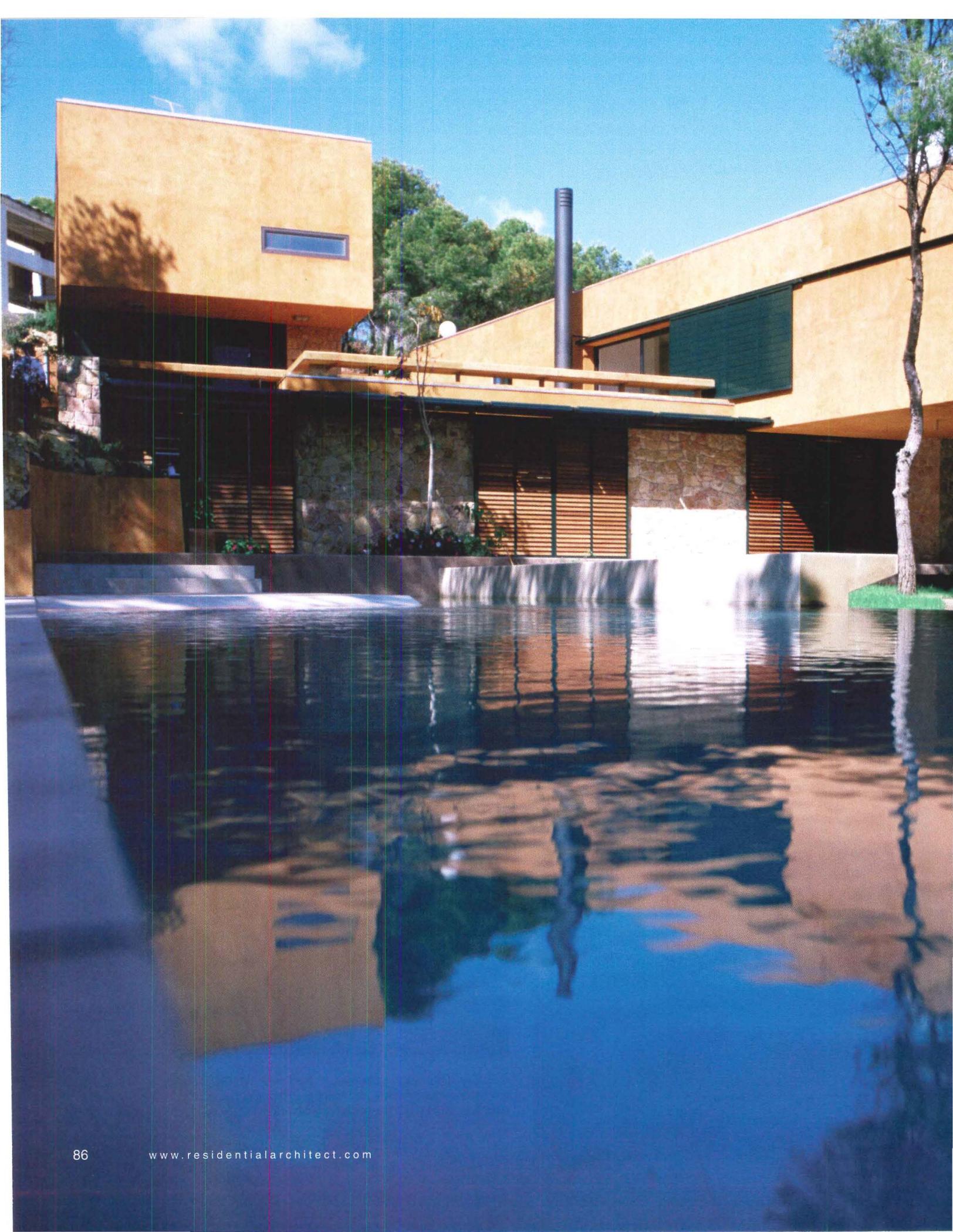
first floor



second floor



The open, light-filled upper floor houses public rooms such as the kitchen, dining room, and lounge; bedrooms, baths, and a private courtyard are contained downstairs.



domain in spain

Several years ago, Xavier Vendrell found himself in a position most architects would envy. As the co-partner of a 15-person firm in Barcelona, Spain, he'd designed many well-received buildings and public spaces, including multiple projects for the 1992 Olympics. But something seemed wrong to him. "My office in Barcelona was growing," he says, but "I felt it was losing energy. I remember when I started in architecture,

when I got my first commission. You are so happy and so excited. As life evolves, you try to do a good job because you're a professional, but you think, 'New job, new problem.'"

So the Barcelona-born Vendrell left his practice—and his country—in 1999 and moved to the United States to teach at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Once settled in Chicago, he formed a small firm, accepting just a few commissions a year. Among the lucky customers to obtain his services was a young Barcelona family who had befriended Vendrell. Family members wanted a full-time residence built on some coastal property they owned in Tarragona, Spain—about 60 miles southwest of Barcelona.



Vendrell carefully preserved as many existing pine trees as possible, giving his clients extra shade and keeping the local ecosystem intact. The swimming pool's edge seems to disappear into the pool blue Mediterranean Sea.

outside influences

mexico / australia / sweden / spain

Vendrell set about designing it from his Chicago studio, using e-mail and frequent telephone calls to facilitate a constant exchange of ideas and also working with the assistance of architects Claudi Aguiló in Barcelona and Carlos Salinas in Chicago. He even lugged a large balsa-wood model with him on the plane to show the clients during one of his periodic trips to Spain.

According to Vendrell, most Spanish architecture begins with an understanding of the site—its topography, climate, and cultural history. He took all three into account with his design for the house, which steps down a rocky hillside. Its earth-toned, integrally colored stucco volumes and ochre-hued stone base blend with their surroundings. Geothermal heat pumps and solar panels draw much of the home's energy from the natural environment, and a cistern at the lowest part of the site captures rainwater to use for landscape irrigation. Sliding wood louvers along most of the windows block the hot Mediterranean sun during the summertime while still letting in cool sea breezes, thus eliminating the need for air conditioning.

The family likes to spend time outdoors, so Vendrell sprinkled terraces and patios throughout the project. He never lost sight of the lifestyle and philosophy of the owners. "When you are doing a place where people live, you enter a little bit into the intimacy of their lives," he explains. "In a way you are like a tailor. They need to be comfortable, and you bring your expertise." Ever since he revamped his professional life, he's been able to dedicate himself fully to every project he designs, including the Tarragona house. "I decided to do less work and am enjoying it," he says. "If you enjoy what you do, the work is better."—*m.d.*



project:

Casa Abelló, Tarragona, Spain

architect:

Xavier Vendrell Studio, Chicago/Barcelona, Spain

general contractor:

Domenech Construction, Tarragona

construction architect:

Eulàlia Aran, Barcelona

structural architect:

Obiol, Moya & Associates, Barcelona

mechanical engineer:

Juan González, Barcelona

project size:

2,920 square feet

site size:

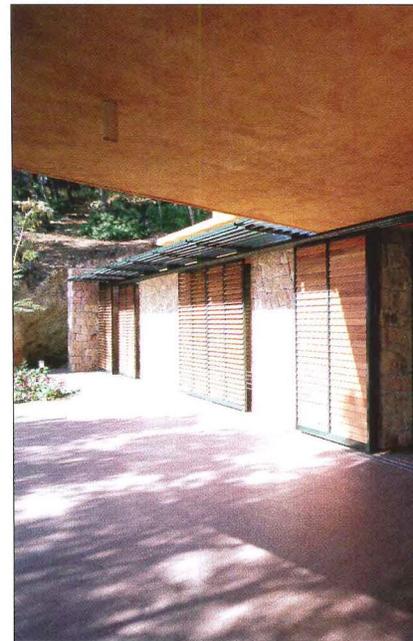
0.6 acre

construction cost:

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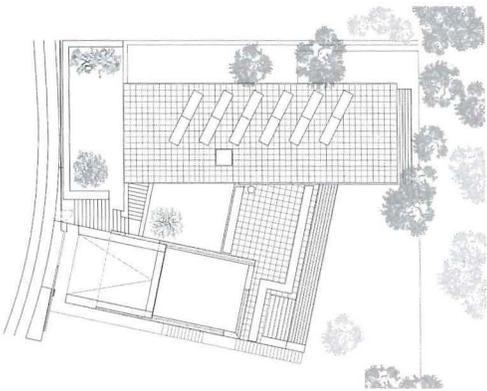
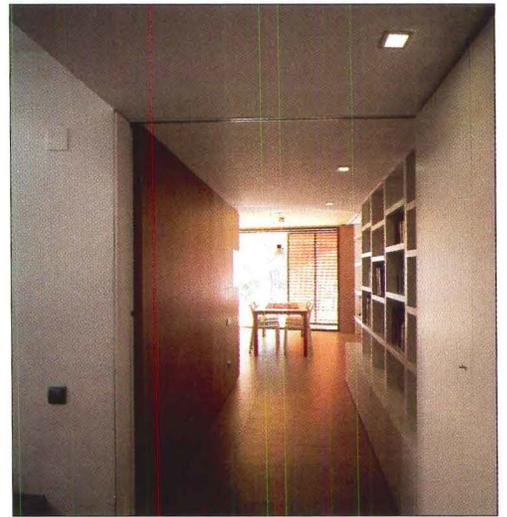
photography:

Mònica Roselló and Jordi Guillumet

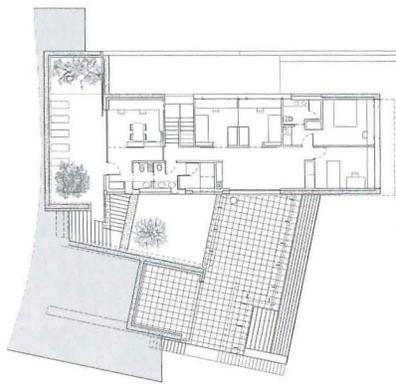




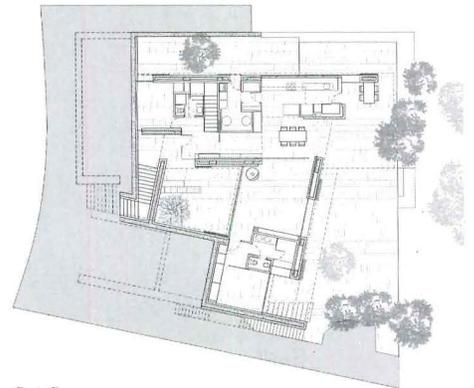
A stone-walled courtyard (opposite, top) and a dining terrace off the kitchen (left) are just two of the project's many outdoor rooms. Even a book-lined hallway (below) receives a generous amount of natural light.



third floor



second floor



first floor

Along with solar panels and geothermal heat pumps, the house employs passive solar techniques such as deep roof overhangs, movable wood louvers, and wood trellises.

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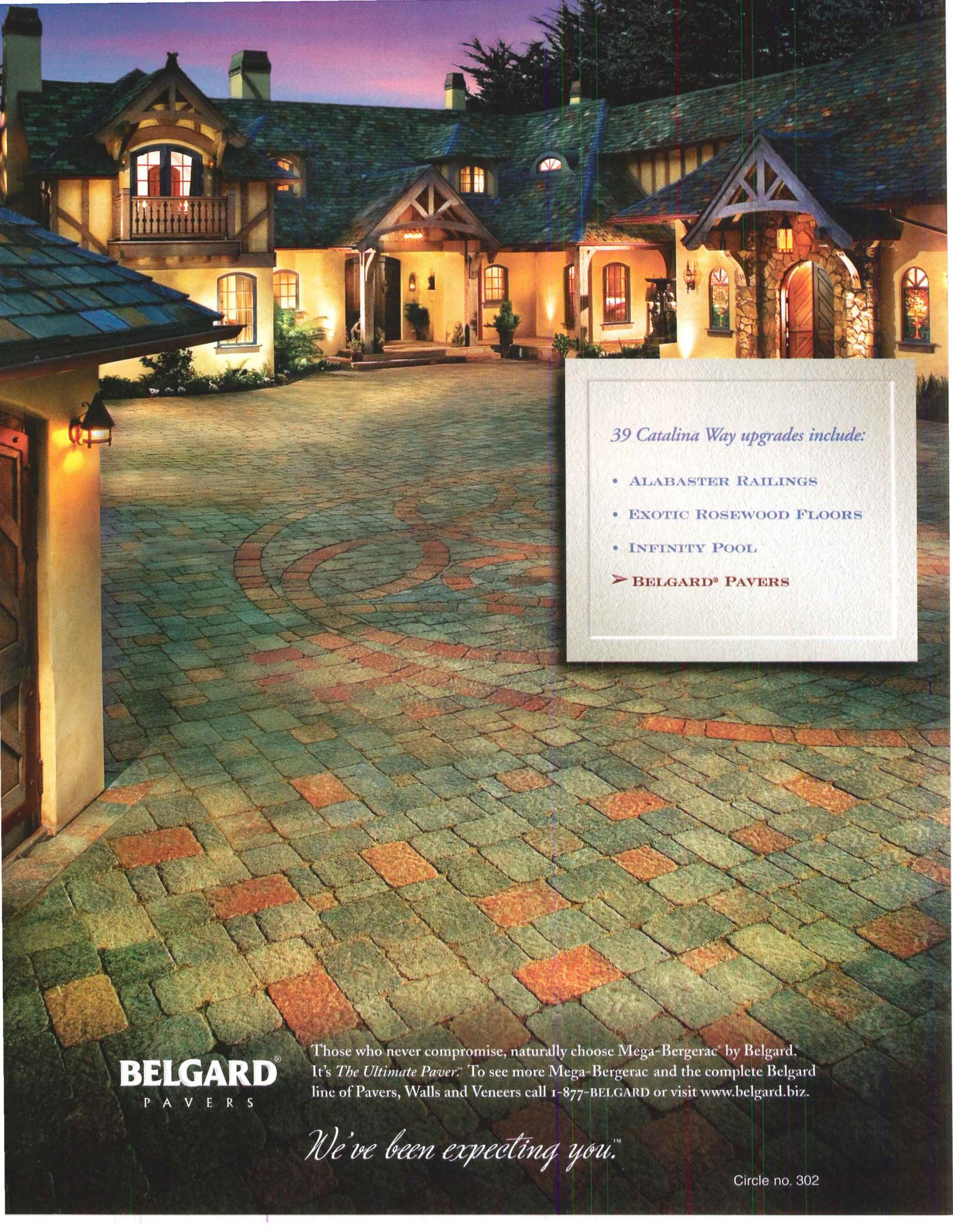
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doctor spec

outer limits

american architects are boldly specing ventilated façades.

by nigel f. maynard

any product junkie knows many innovative developments happen overseas. The international community's willingness to experiment with cutting-edge materials has yielded architectural favorites such as fiber-cement siding, wood-resin exterior panels, and cellulose-wood laminated cladding.

Another import now making incremental inroads in this country is the ventilated façade—a wall system many architects and building scientists cite as one of the most effective ways to clad a building. Unlike typical stick-built framing, a ventilated wall is a complex multilayer system (similar to a rainscreen) that creates a 3-inch to 7-inch air space around a building. Insulation is applied on top of the sheathing instead of within the wall cavity, resulting in a wall construction comprised of studs, waterproof sheathing, a vapor barrier, rigid-foam insulation, an aluminum frame, and wall covering.

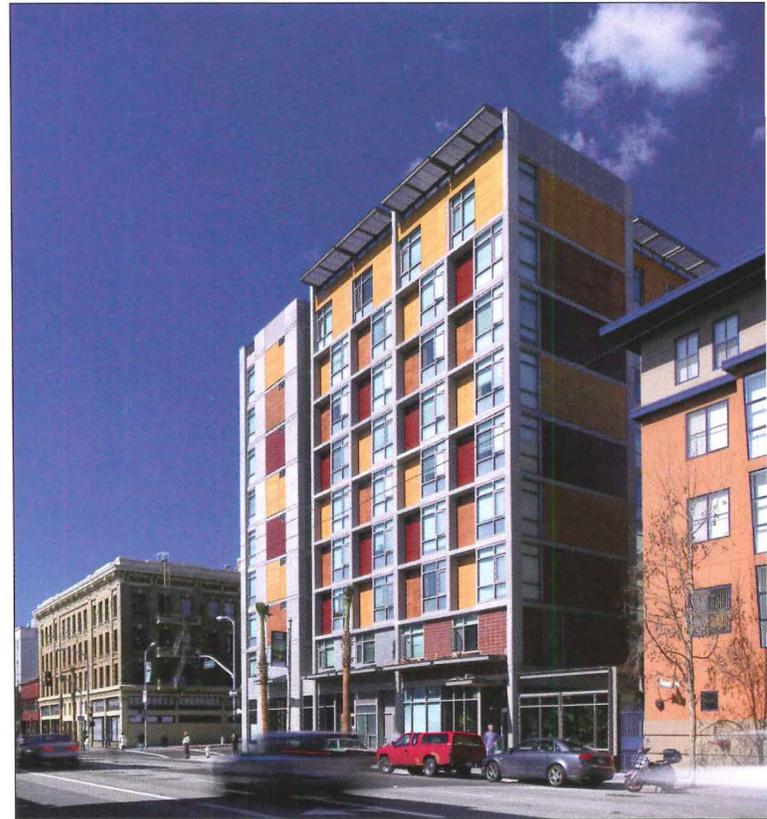
What makes the system so great? According to Richard Stacy, AIA, a principal at San Francisco-based Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects, ventilated façades are better designed “to avoid water intrusion because the pres-

sure behind the cladding is equalized with the exterior.” There's also “less thermal transfer and better R-value because of the air space,” he says.

Michael P. Johnson, principal of Michael P. Johnson Design Studios, Cave Creek, Ariz., says ventilated façades are better for the environment, too. “The chimney effect the system creates causes cool air to pass over the insulation and warm air to exit out the top of the wall,” he explains. Because the building is constantly being ventilated, the result is a more energy-efficient house—up to 30 percent more efficient—that stays cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

Contractors who've worked with the systems second the point. “It's about the most effective wall you can have in the summertime,” says Dave Traino, CEO, Carmel Architectural Sales, an Anaheim, Calif.-based provider of exterior building envelope solutions to the architecture community. “In the winter,” he adds, “it's the same deal.”

Constant ventilation also creates a powerful moisture-management system that



Tim Griffith

Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects and Paulett Taggart Architects cite energy benefits and stunning good looks as reasons for using a ventilated façade with resin-wood panels on the Plaza Apartments, a low-income housing project in San Francisco.

helps to eliminate mold. Because of the way it's installed, the cladding resists about “90 percent of the water” that comes into contact with it, says Kelton Dissel, an associate at Paulett Taggart Architects, San Francisco. The rest, he says, “evaporates quickly.”

Beyond increased efficiency, a ventilated façade offers other tangible benefits. According to Peter Lollias, architectural sales division president in the Saddle Brook, N.J., office of Porcelanosa USA (a

Spanish ceramic tile manufacturer that offers ventilation façades), the system “acts as a sound barrier, is easy to clean, and requires minimal maintenance.”

on tile

For some architects, the environmental benefits and versatility of a ventilated wall can't be beat. Its grid system can be configured to accept a wide range of materials, including stone tiles, cement board, Parklex or Prodema resin-wood

continued on page 98

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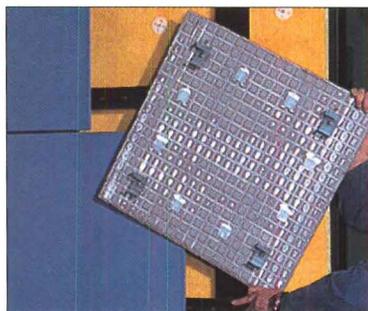
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panels, and Trespa cellulose-wood laminate.

Recently, Italian and Spanish ceramic tile manufacturers have been spreading the word that tile is one of the best cladding options available. Ceramic porcelain tiles “guarantee the best performance obtainable and desirable,” according to a presentation by Arturo Mastelli, a consultant for Ceramic Tiles of Italy and president of AM&A Marketing in Key Biscayne, Fla. “They are mechanically strong and physically resilient to most of the hardships [that deteriorate] exterior walls.”

Johnson, who is doing a house in Italy with ceramic tile, agrees that the qualities which make tile an ideal material in normal applications make it perfect for ventilated façades, too. “Tile lasts forever,” he says. “And if you use a polished porcelain tile, it becomes self-cleaning.”

Most Italian and Spanish tile companies—among them Iris Fabbrica Marmi e Graniti, GranitiFiandre, Tau Cerámica, and Alcagres—make ceramic cladding for walls, but some companies



Courtesy American Marazzi Tile

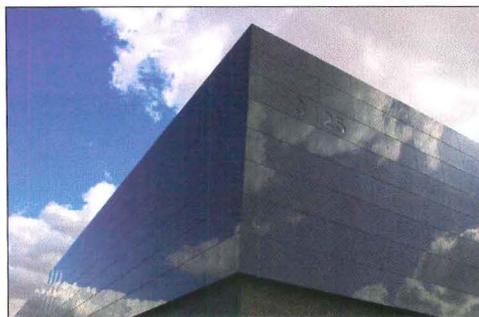
Marazzi’s Technica exposed- or concealed-hook system comes with glazed ceramic tiles measuring up to 24 inches by 36 inches.

offer the entire system. American Marazzi Tile, the U.S. division of the Italian outfit, is one example; its Technica system includes the tiles, framing grid, and rigid fiberglass insulation.

Ventilated façades’ longevity, environmental benefits, and design versatility have made them especially popular in Italy and Spain, where they grace many buildings and residences. Architect Renzo Piano used a system with terra-cotta cladding for his Rue de Meaux low-income housing project in Paris. Many of the new multifamily buildings in Germany also feature ventilated systems. And in Russia, the transition to monolithic frame construction with external insulation and unventilated and ventilated façades has been partially responsible for the reduction in the country’s energy use for heating over the past eight years.

piece de resistance?

Traino, a 10-year veteran of ventilated façade installations, says the United States might be the only country that has not fully embraced ventilated walls, and there are a handful of theories why this is so. One belief is that unfamiliarity with the system makes people suspicious. “Innovation and creativity are dirty words to government agencies, bureaucrats, and code officials,” he reasons. “There is a tremendous resistance to innovation, so the system is scary to a lot of people.”



Courtesy Michael P. Johnson Design Studios

Architectural designer Michael P. Johnson chose Marazzi’s ventilated system with polished ceramic tiles for the Wilkinson Building in Phoenix.

Dissel has a slightly different take, however. “Things seem to start in Europe because there are less code restrictions,” he says. Here, he adds, “we have to show code officials that a system can work.”

Traino says American designers and clients also resist ventilated systems because they don’t mesh well with our construction culture. “Everything is done efficiently and quickly, but a ventilated wall is a labor-intensive process,” he says. That makes it expensive, too—a reality that Stacy says may be its biggest obstacle. “There is a premium in cost over conventional cladding,” he says. “I think this is largely due to the lack of experienced installers and the greater degree of sophistication required of the installer.”

Although the average cost of a ventilated façade is \$40 to \$75 per square foot, it’s possible to reduce those numbers. GranitiFiandre says smaller slabs require more substructures to hold them in place, increasing the structural and application costs. Larger slabs, by comparison, require less substructure; they’re therefore quicker and cheaper to install.

Despite the cost, Traino says more architects in the

Northeast, Chicago, California, and Seattle are using such systems in their buildings. Italian firm C&A Architecture and Interiors recently used Marazzi’s ventilated system to clad an Arizona house in large 24-inch-by-24-inch ceramic. In San Francisco, Paulett Taggart Architects and Leddy Maytum Stacy used a modified ventilated system with wood-resin panels over rigid insulation for the Plaza Apartments, a LEED-certified low-income housing project that has won numerous awards for sustainability. “The concept is similar to a ventilated wall,” Paulett Taggart’s Dissel says of the façade. “It allows air to pass around the insulation material.”

In addition to the Plaza Apartments, Leddy Maytum Stacy has used ventilated systems on an office building, a condominium, and two houses. Stacy agrees that the concept is catching on here, but he wouldn’t be surprised to see it remain a niche product. “I think it will be limited to higher-quality residential buildings due to cost,” he says.

Nonetheless, for those with the nerve, verve, and budget to try them, ventilated façades are a breath of fresh air. *ra*

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whole-house audio integration drives ahead.

by rebecca day

Electronics integrators like Tim Wilcox would rather their customers didn't know how easy an A-BUS distributed audio system is to install. The multisource, multizone music system does much of what only expensive, hard-to-wire audio systems could deliver in the past. "It's superintuitive for the end user and it's pretty easy to install, but it works like magic," he says.

Notably, the A-BUS system allows integration companies like Wilcox's JWE Corp. to bring whole-house audio efficiently and reliably to a broader segment of the population. "Our focus is production home building, so we need solutions that allow us to get in and out with [the fewest] callbacks possible," Wilcox says. "A-BUS improves our world because we don't get calls for support."

a peek at the engine

Developed by Australia-based LeisureTech Electronics, A-BUS is licensed in the United States to structured wiring and electronics firms such as Cambridge Audio, Channel Vision Technology, DSC, Eaton Corp., Harman Kardon, Honeywell, Integra,

Jamo, MTX Audio, Opus Technologies, Phase Technology, Russound, and UStec. A-BUS products are sold in both custom and retail channels, and UStec integrates A-BUS as part of its structured wiring portfolio.

Part of A-BUS' appeal is its streamlined wiring. The system is built around the ubiquitous Category-5 cable, an eight-conductor communications wire that's the backbone of structured wiring, home networks, and residential telephone systems. A single Cat-5 cable transports the power, control, and audio signals required to carry music from an audio/video equipment stack to other rooms in a home. The Cat-5 connection also enables bidirectional data communication so users can tell if the system is on or off in other rooms.

The heart of the system is the A-BUS hub (either an audio/video receiver or a dedicated module), which connects to amplified keypads in other rooms via Cat-5 cabling. The hub connects to the source components, including their

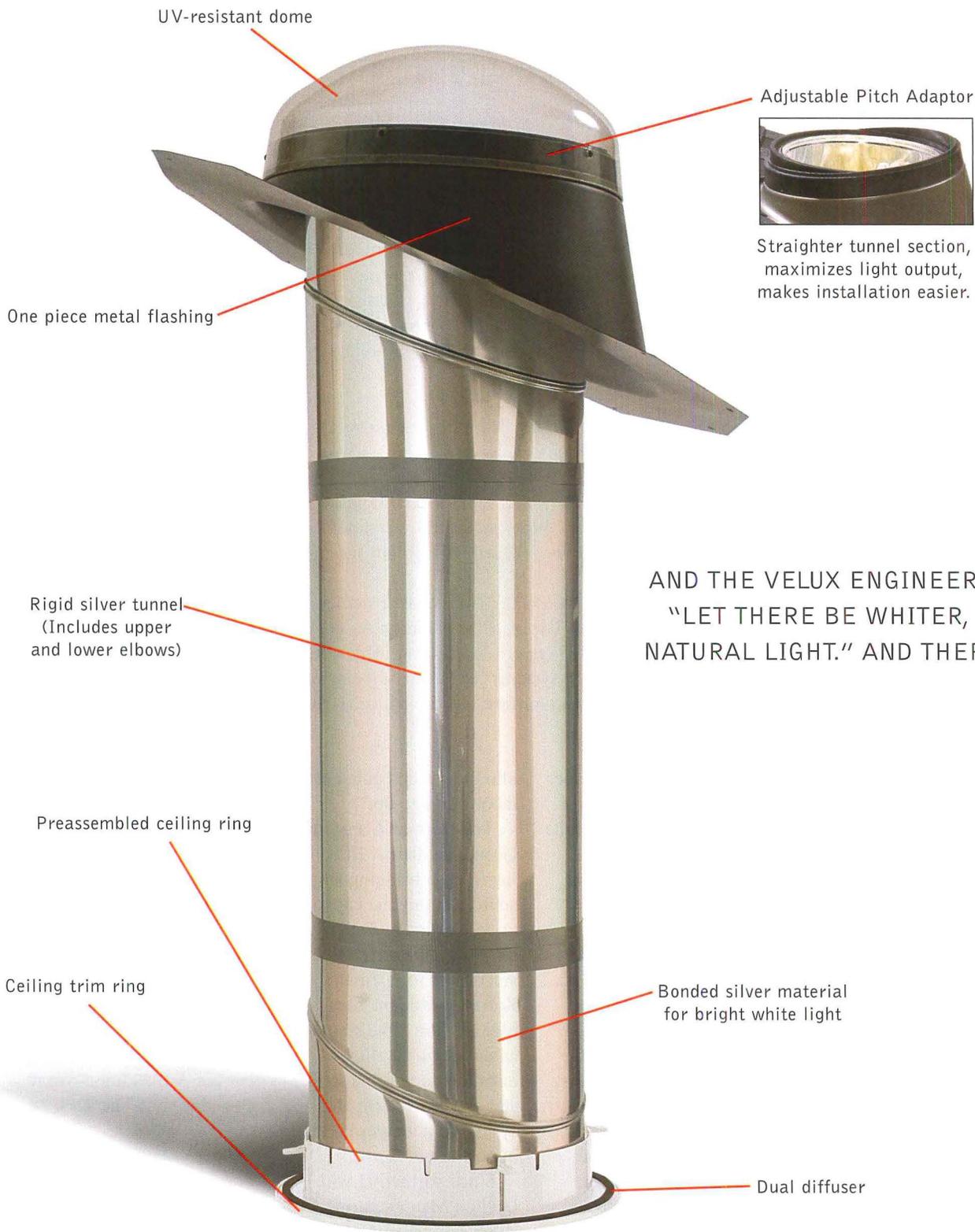


Keypads from Harman Kardon (left) and Russound (right) bring A-BUS distributed audio technology to the home. The streamlined wiring system is built around Category-5 cable.

infrared receivers, thereby allowing remote control operation of the equipment from keypads in other rooms. Keypads also pack onboard digital amplifiers, which don't give off excess heat the way analog amplifiers do, in turn allowing for much smaller designs that fit in the wall. Keypads connect to the speakers using standard speaker wire. Homeowners select sources from the keypad or by using a handheld remote control to send commands through a keypad's IR (infrared) sensor.

Positioning the amplifiers in each room, closer to the speakers, has two tangible benefits. First, it minimizes the number of cables that must be strung from the equipment head end to the speakers. (The Cat-5 cable handles what used to be accomplished with four-conductor speaker wire, a control cable, and AC wiring.) Plus, the shorter the distance the audio signals have to travel, the less signal loss that occurs along the way. The result: better sound.

continued on page 102



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in under the wire

For JWE, which works with production builders, the A-BUS platform provides a more high-tech audio option. “Before A-BUS, we just did volume controls to speakers,” Wilcox says. “We’d leave clients a bundle of wires at their media niche and they never knew what to do with them.” The wires stayed that way, he adds, because going back to tailor a system to homeowners’ needs would turn a production job into a custom installation. “With A-BUS, because it finishes out and trims the same way every time, we can put in a better solution for the homeowner,” he explains.

A basic A-BUS system—the kind typically found in retail A/V receivers—distributes one source of audio to one or more rooms. Multisource A-BUS systems, sold by Russound and other manufacturers that cater to the custom market, distribute audio from up to four sources—say CD, satellite radio, FM radio, and iPod—to an unlimited number of rooms.

At JWE, a typical custom installation comprises four zones, including one zone of outside coverage. In the Southern California market, for example, a four-zone A-BUS system costs about \$3,400 to install, with a builder margin of roughly 50 percent.

A-BUS is the second solution in Russound’s distributed audio lineup. As the first A-BUS licensee in the United States, Russound

standardizing multiroom audio

When the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) published the ANSI/CEA-2030 Multiroom Audio Cabling Standard last year, it brought welcome conformity to an industry that had been patched together by disparate wiring solutions.

Meant to complement TIA-570-B, the Telecommunications Industry Association’s Residential Telecommunications Infrastructure Standard, the new standard provides a uniform method “for installing cable for use in residences being prewired for multiroom audio,” says Megan Hayes, CEA’s manager of standards development. “If a builder uses ANSI/CEA-2030, the cables and connectors will be in the appropriate places for hooking up a multiroom audio system, no matter which system a homeowner decides to use.”

For manufacturers and installers, ANSI/CEA-2030 “provides a clear path for determining what an appropriate distributed media backbone is,” says Russound’s Jeff Kussard. “If audio/video or low-voltage contractors comply with the standard, the wires and connectors will support not only current multimedia needs but future ones as well.” That’s good news for builders and homeowners, who can be assured that a home’s wiring won’t be obsolete as new technologies emerge. “The standard bridges the gap,” he adds, “between legacy multiroom systems and newer systems like A-BUS that are digital.”

The standard also moves the industry one step closer to achieving what CEA and the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (CEDIA) call “fourth trade status.” Their goal is to see consumers, architects, builders, and government regulators view an electronic systems contractor as being as essential and integral to new-home construction as a plumber, electrician, or HVAC contractor. —*r.d.*

positions its A-BUS product as a starter remote control-based infrared system at the entry level and as higher-end keypad solutions that provide detailed system status and feedback.

“A-BUS improves on our starter solution because it’s a lower-cost implementation,” says Jeff Kussard, vice president of strategic development for Russound. Cost savings are realized by running simplified Cat-5 wiring (rather than more expensive speaker wire) from the equipment stack to keypads. “Not only is the cost of speaker wire more expensive,” he explains, “but heavier, larger-diameter cable takes more

effort to run and pull, making labor costs go up.”

The Harman Consumer Group, another A-BUS licensee, is bringing single-source, multizone capability to consumers in four of its six audio/video receivers. According to Harman Kardon president Tom McLoughlin, “the single-cable approach allows installers to put in a moderately priced but capable system to a greater number of customers.”

Since partnering with Leviton Manufacturing Co. in the development of LE&AP—Leviton Entertainment & Applications Platform, Leviton’s multiroom audio solution—McLoughlin says

Harman has also been “looking at creating systems to deal with the builders directly.” That effort could result in next-generation-powered A-BUS speakers from one of Harman’s speaker brands (among them Harman Kardon, Infinity, and JBL). As for next-generation A-BUS products to complement its current A-BUS line, “We’re considering it,” he says. *ra*

Rebecca Day specializes in writing about home electronics. She can be reached at customhomerd@aol.com. A version of this article originally appeared in residential architect’s sister publication CUSTOM HOME.

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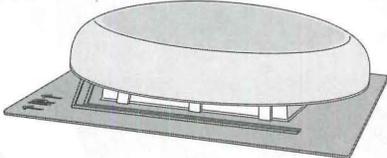
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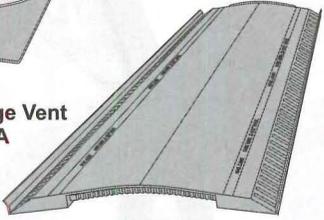
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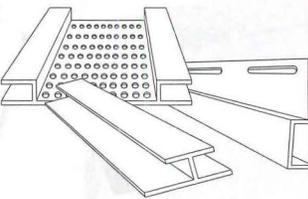
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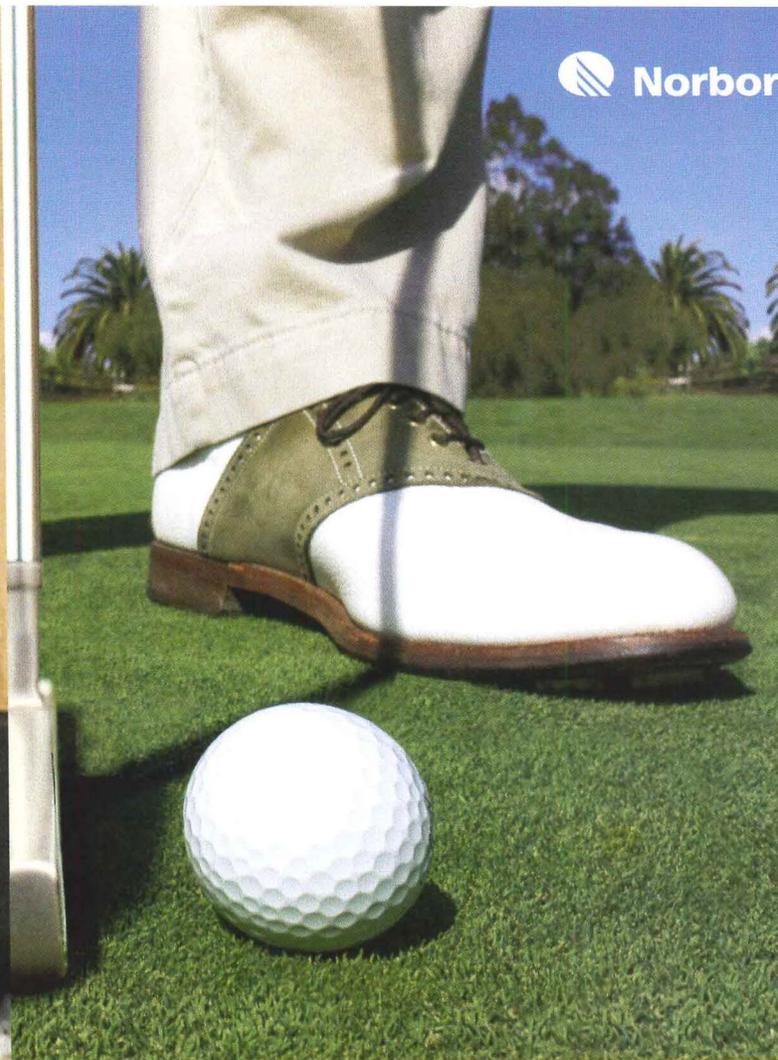
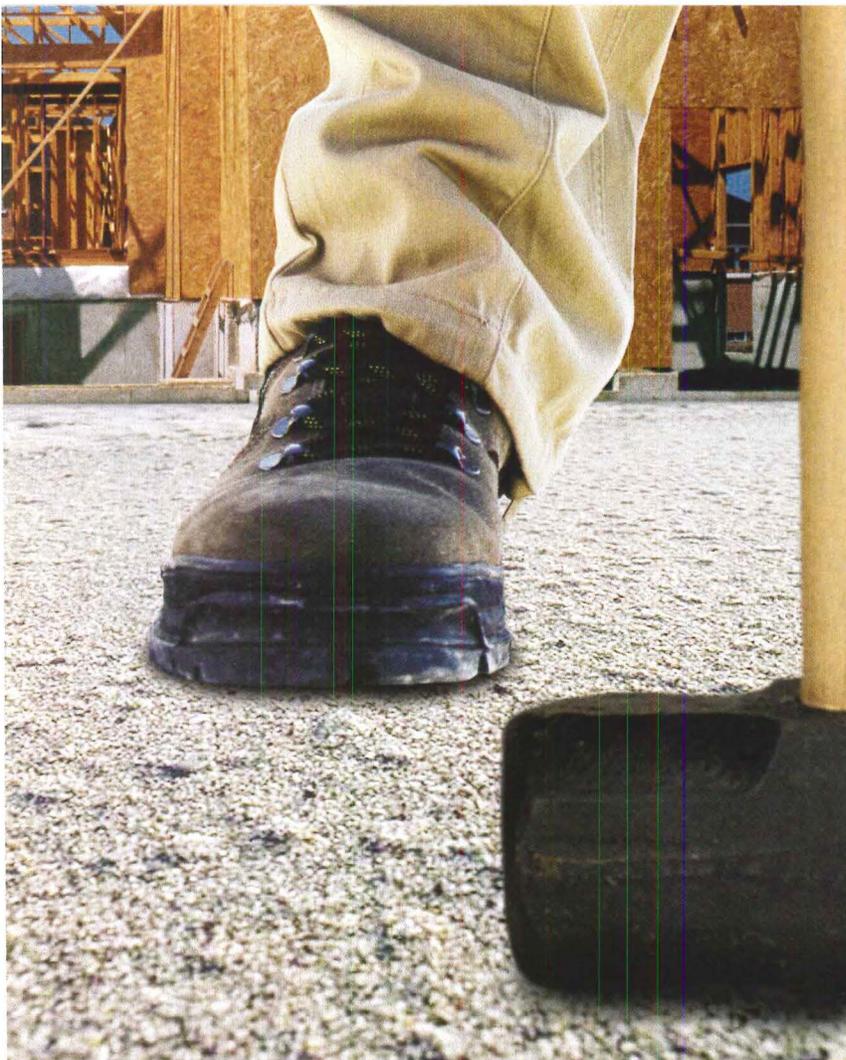
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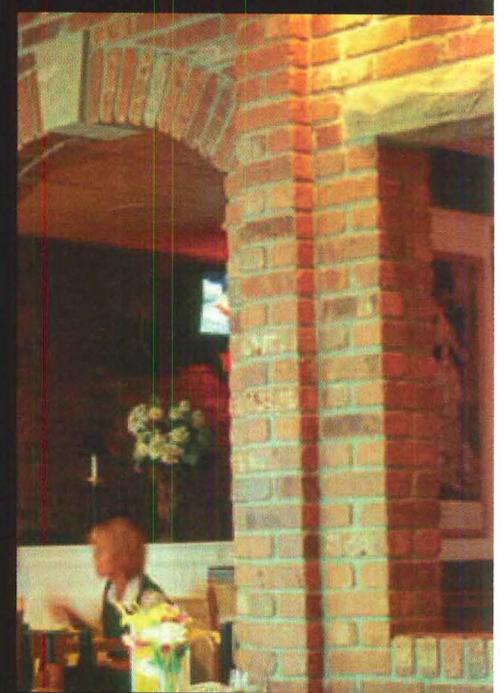
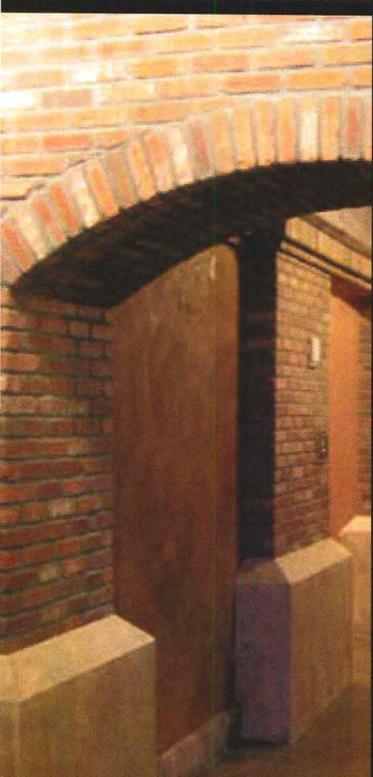
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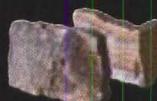
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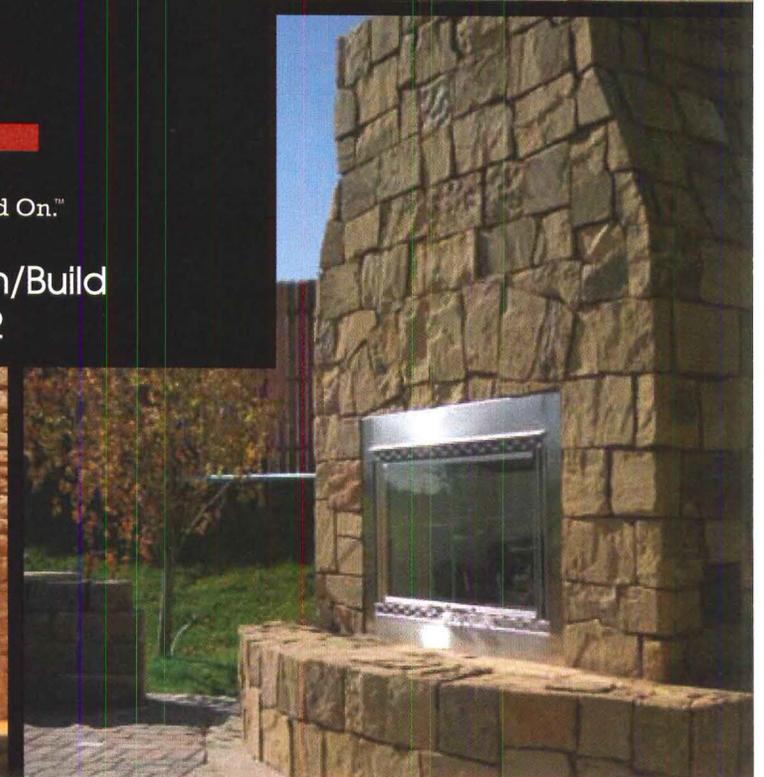
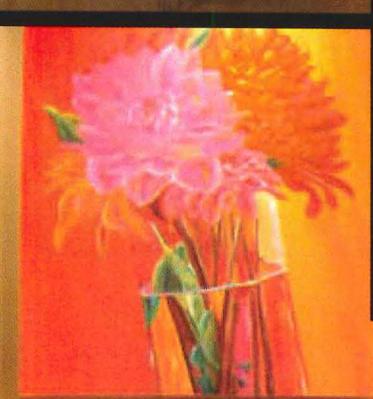
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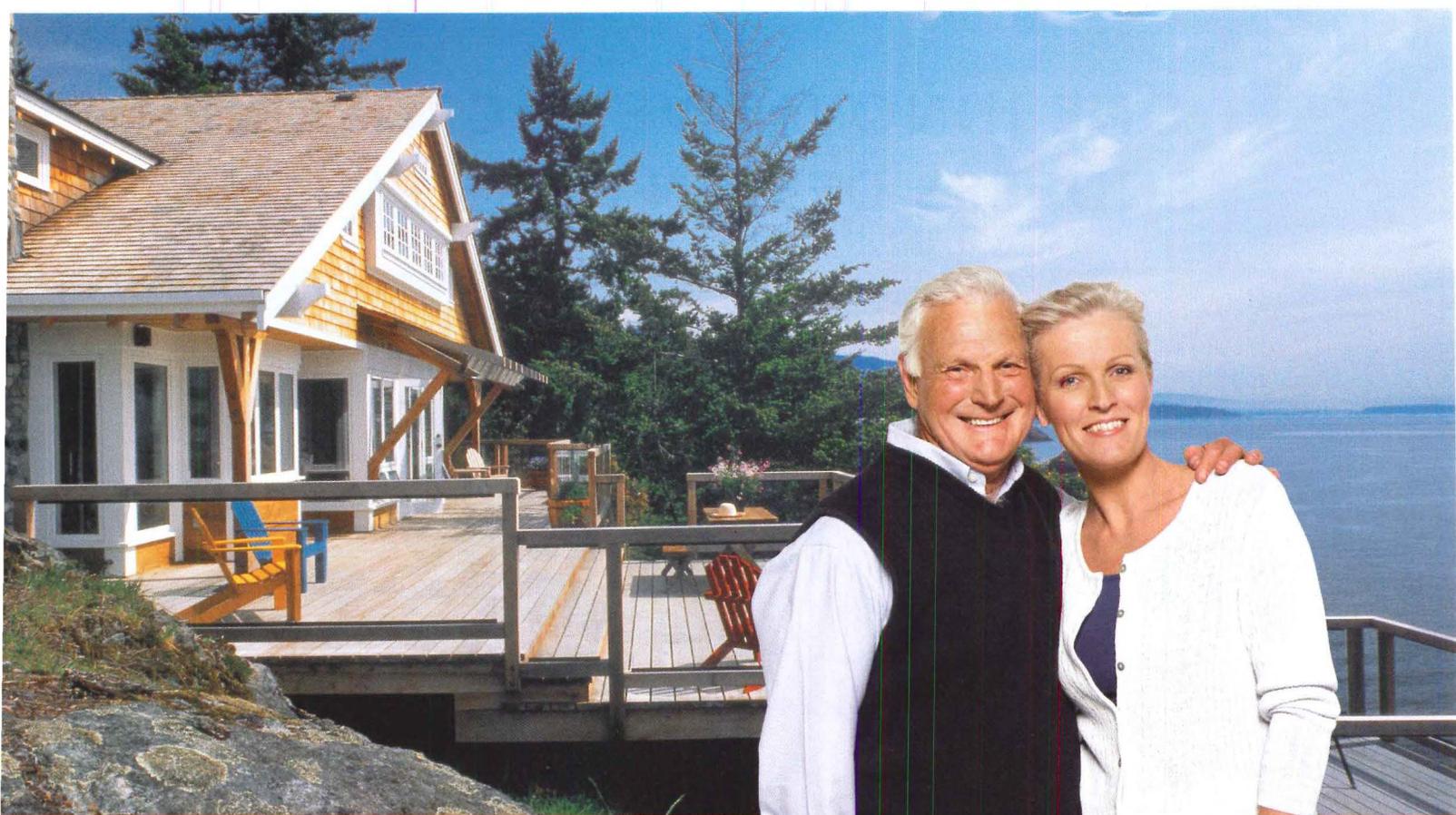
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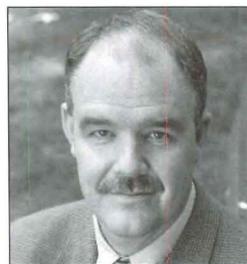


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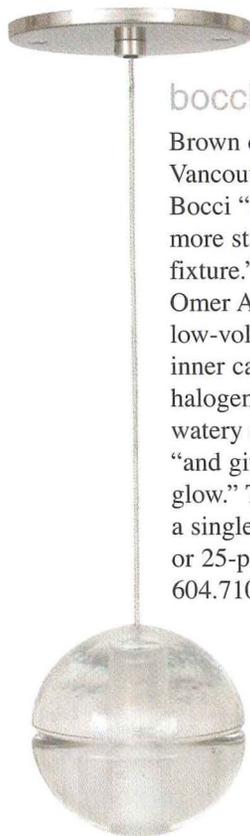
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Brown calls the 14 Series from Vancouver, British Columbia-based Bocci "a subtle alternative to the more standard dining table light fixture." Designed by architect Omer Arbel, each hand-poured, low-voltage pendant has a frosted inner cavity that houses a 10-watt halogen light. "The spheres have a watery appearance," Brown raves, "and give each bulb a candlelight glow." The product can be speced as a single pendant or in three-, five-, or 25-pendant configurations. Bocci, 604.710.4486; www.bocci.ca.

grass roots

Brown has long been a fan of sustainable bamboo flooring, so he's delighted by recent manufacturing refinements that "have made it possible to fabricate a matching open-riser stair" using the material. This housebrand project, by local fabricator Timber-Tech Stairs, also features bamboo veneer on the structural stringers. Timber-Tech Stairs, 800.978.2477; www.timbertechstairs.com.



—nigel f. maynard



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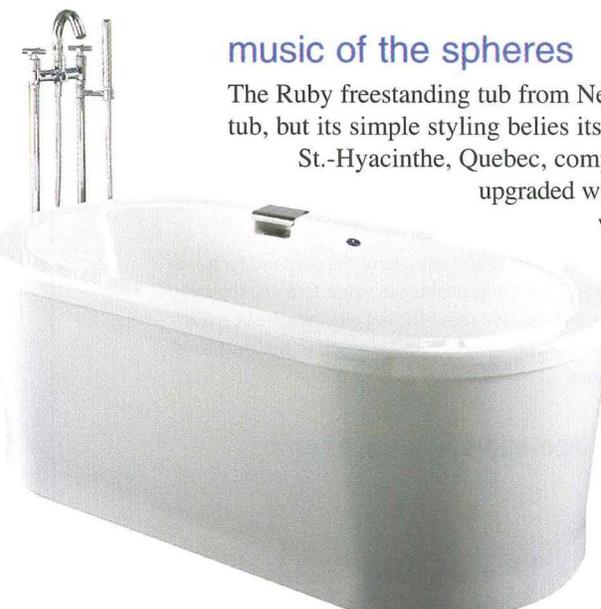
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music of the spheres



The Ruby freestanding tub from Neptune looks like any other tub, but its simple styling belies its otherworldly wonders. The St.-Hyacinthe, Quebec, company's latest innovation can be upgraded with the Neptuner audio system, which sends sound waves through the tub's shell, transforming the bath into a surround-sound experience. It's also outfitted with Ultim-O, an immersion system that installs on the tub's interior top edge to give bathers three more inches of water depth. Neptune, 450.773.7058; www.neptuneb.com.



trompe hue

From silk ties to luxury automobiles, design may be Italy's best-known export. The Lingotto collection of double-fired ceramic wall tiles from Oderzo, Italy-based Appiani continues that tradition. Designed to balance the lean silhouette of contemporary furnishings, Lingotto comes in unexpected hues inspired by other materials, including sand, wenge, and stainless steel. Available sizes are decidedly European, too, among them 4 inches by 16 inches and 1 inch by 16 inches. Appiani, 39.0422.815308; www.appiani.it.



viva cucina

Valcucine believes glass is a near-perfect material because it's durable, recyclable, and easy to clean. To prove its premise, the Pordenone, Italy-based company has unveiled a new kitchen line that uses tempered glass panels. Artematica Vitrum's aluminum frame is strong enough to support glass fronts, a worktop, side panels, and a range hood, yet versatile enough to integrate with most design schemes. Available in matte or gloss finishes and various colors and styles. Valcucine, 212.253.5969; www.valcucinena.com.

—nigel f. maynard



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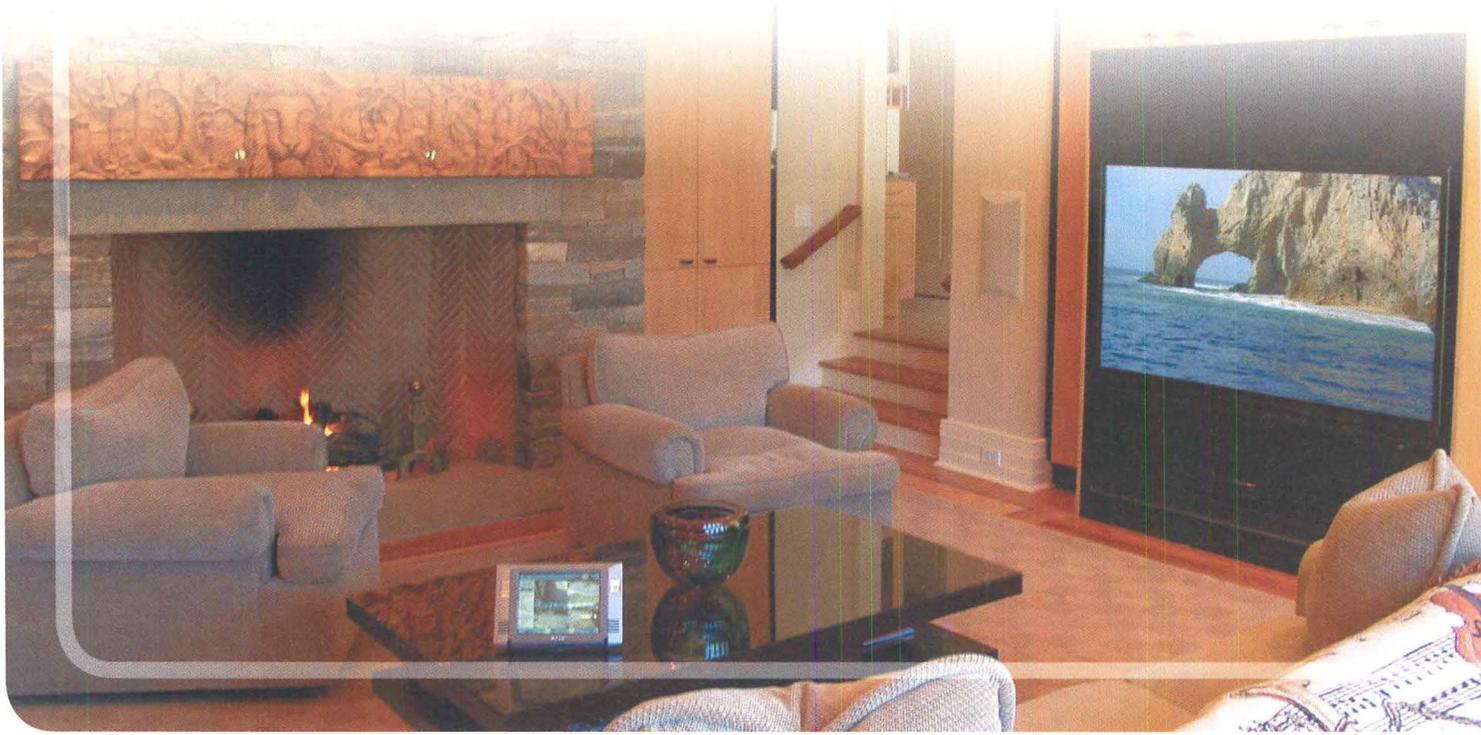


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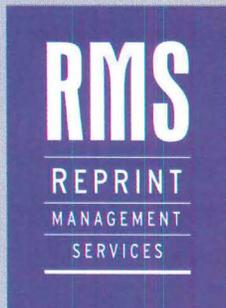
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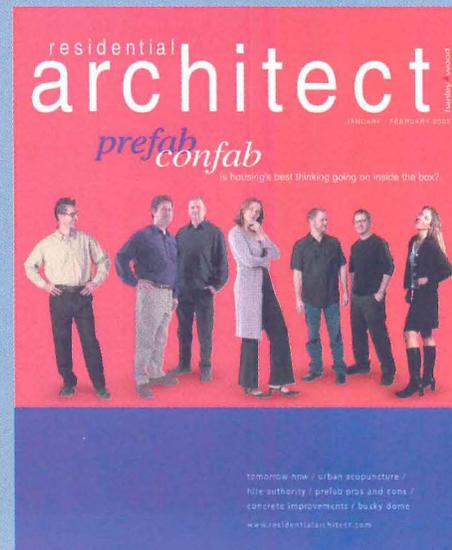
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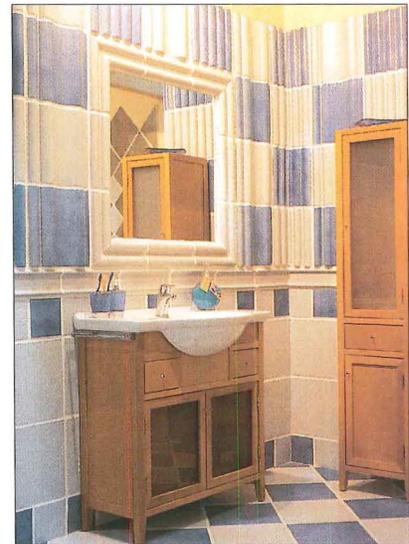
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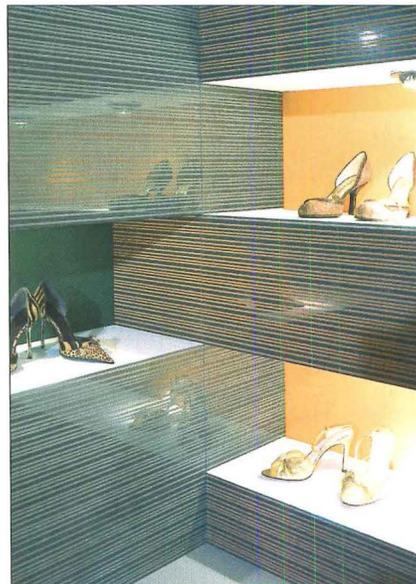
color school

The high-gloss tones and eye-catching hues of the Colors collection from Colorker are tempered by a wavy texture that casts playful shadows and light. The truly adventurous might pair ochre with brown for a retro bath, mix fire-engine red with black and charcoal in a hip kitchen, or couple lime green with periwinkle blue for a laid-back sunroom. Square floor and wall tiles, as well as rectangular trim pieces in multiple sizes, are available. Colorker, 34.964.361616, colorker@colorker.com; www.colorker.com.



eminent domain

The dramatic, asymmetrical curves and rugged strength of the Prestigio Series from Sierragres can punch up any interior or exterior space. Each tile measures 1 foot square, making it a bold choice for most architectural styles. Don't let these hardy abrasion-, scratch-, heat-, and shock-resistant tiles fool you, though: They come in creamy colors like Mediterranean blue and orange-flower white. Sierragres, 34.957.364060, sierragres@sierragres.com; www.sierragres.com.



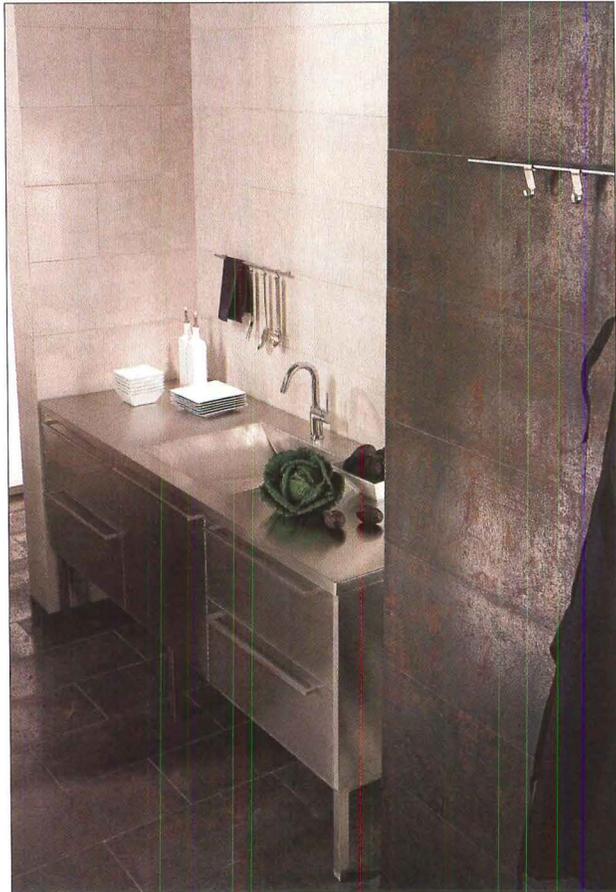
show your stripes

A polished finish highlights sleek stripes, and subtle iridescent flecks give a sense of depth to the funky Geom tile series from Tau Cerámica. Robust sizes—12 inches by 24 inches or 24 inches by 48 inches—and nearly invisible edges

add to the mystique. Geom tiles are available in eight color combinations ranging from pale neutrals to muted primary hues on a black background. Tau Cerámica, 34.964.250105, tau@tauceramic.com; www.tauceramic.com.

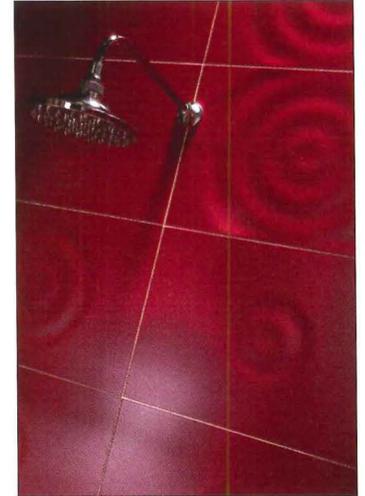
continued on page 118

off the shelf



the tao of tau

Inspired by four metals—copper, rhodium, silver, and steel—Tau Cerámica's *Metálica* collection brings the look of rusted or patinaed metal to porcelain. The water- and frost-resistant tiles can be applied to walls or floors and come in four sizes: 12 inches by 24 inches, 24 inches by 28 inches, and 18-inch and 24-inch squares. Accent and trim pieces are also available. Tau Cerámica, 34.964.250105, tau@tauceramic.com; www.tauceramic.com.



casa fresca

One loop or two? The savvy swirls of Ceracasa Cerámica's Fresh series are sure to win clients and influence interior designers. Five rich hues (beige, blue, burgundy, orange, and white) and a subtle satin finish show off the depth of these tiles' design. Use the textured field tiles alone for a dramatic effect or mix them with smooth mosaic and trim pieces that have been dyed to match. Ceracasa Cerámica, 34.964.361611, ceracasa@ceracasa.com; www.ceracasa.com.



la vida roca

Roca's White Series combines the clean, stylish flexibility of white with distinctive textures. Manufactured in wall or nonslip floor tile configurations, the collection can be specced with a matte or glossy

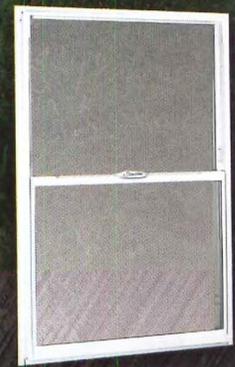
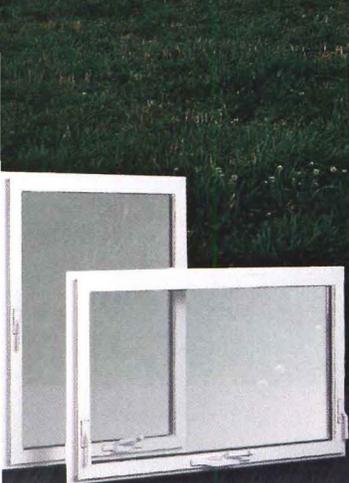
finish. A variety of sizes and complementary styles means you can mix it up at will. Roca Cerámica, 34.938.917600, info@rocatile.com; www.rocatile.com.

—shelley d. hutchins and jillian berman

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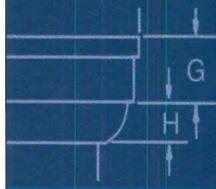


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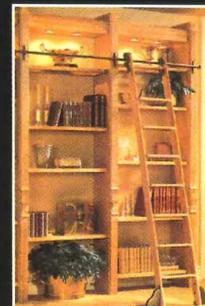
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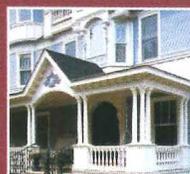
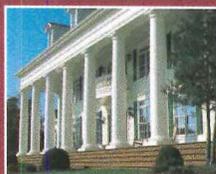
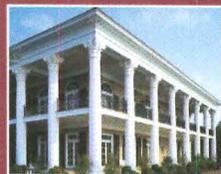
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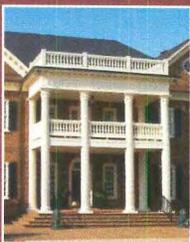
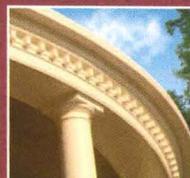


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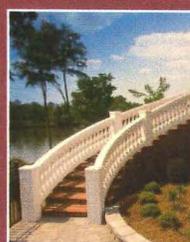
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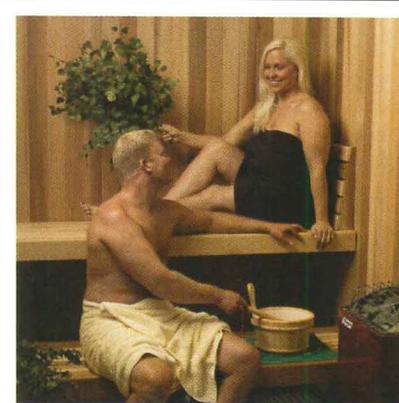


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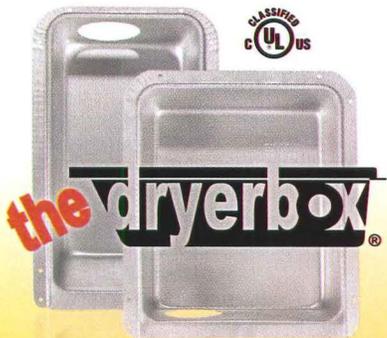
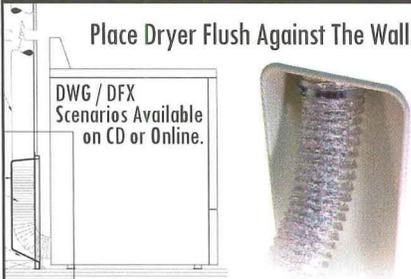
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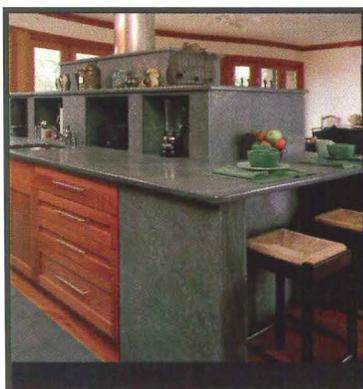
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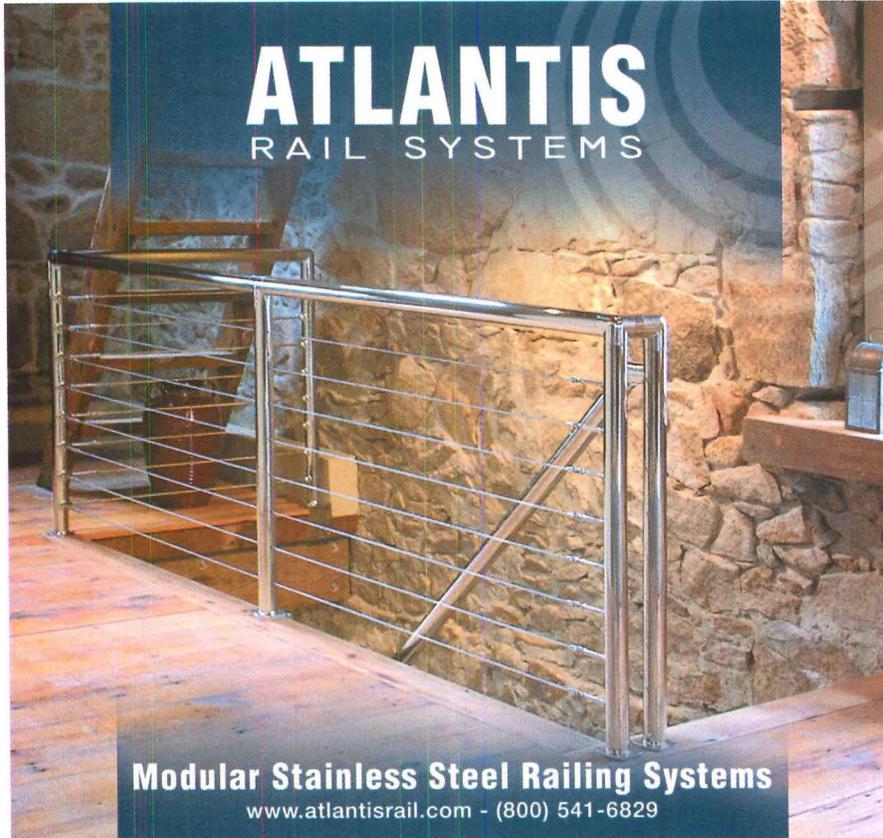
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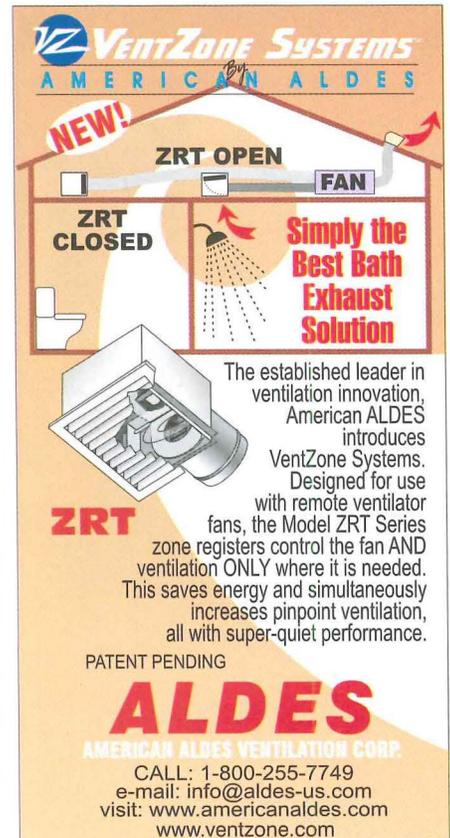
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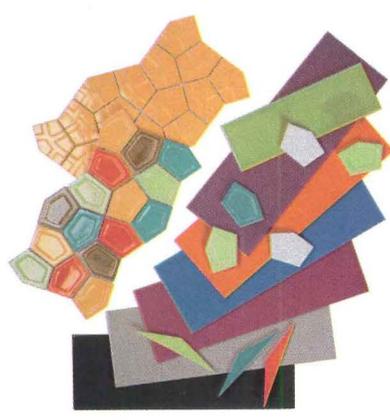
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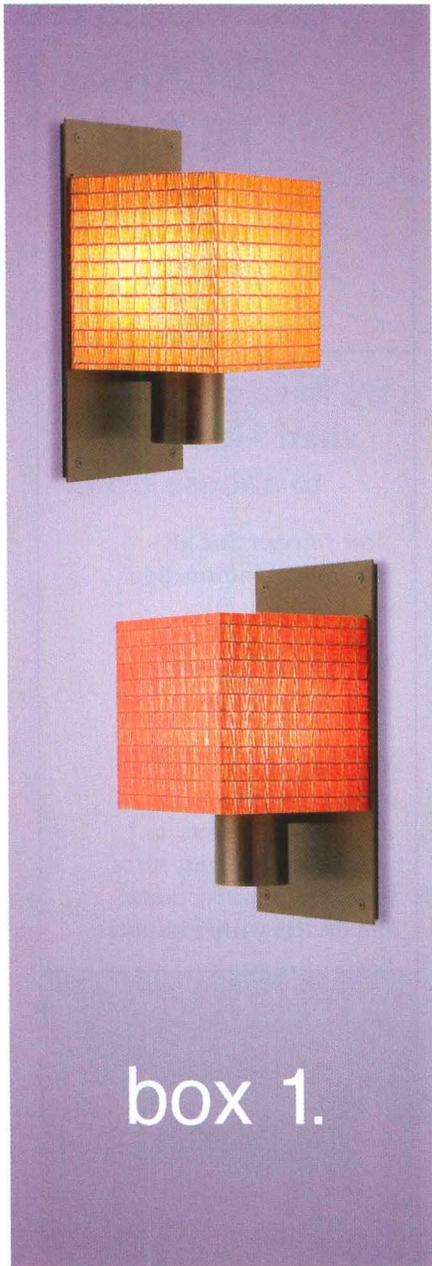


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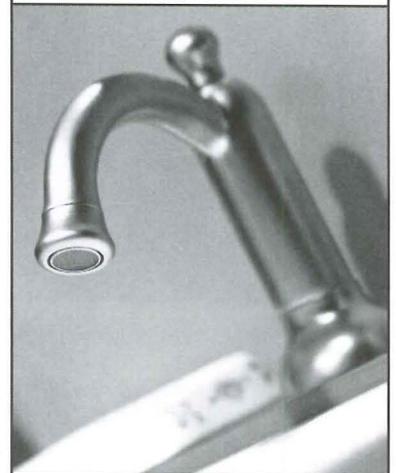
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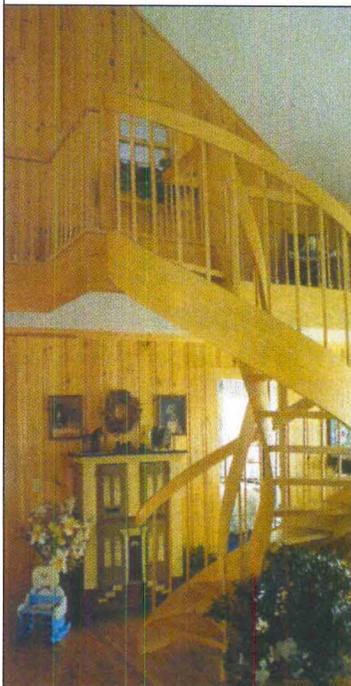


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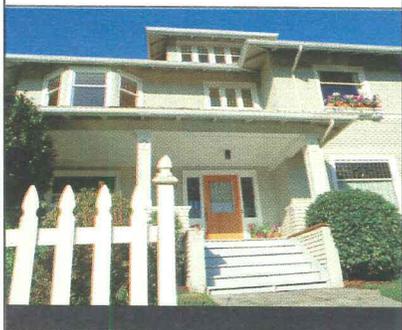
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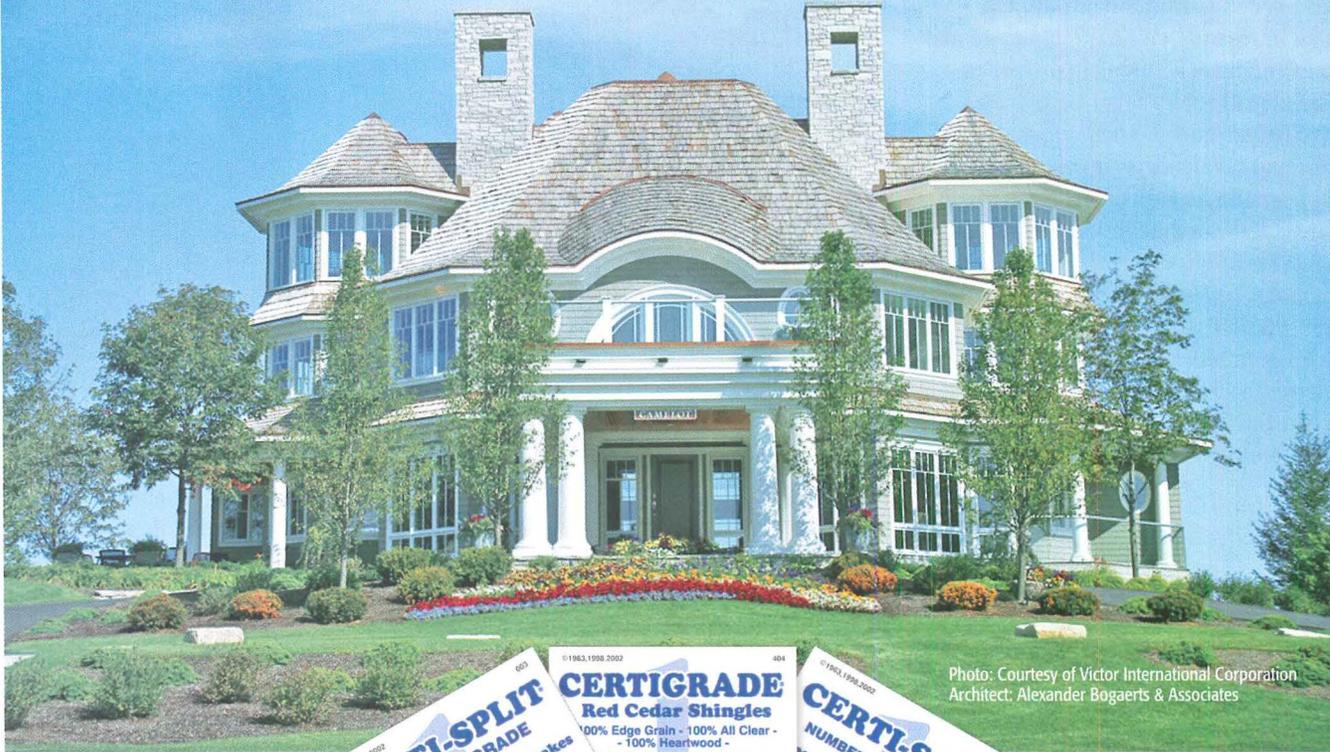


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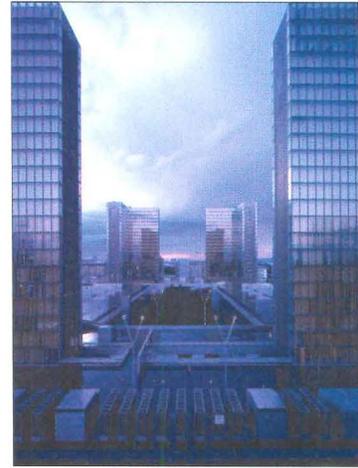
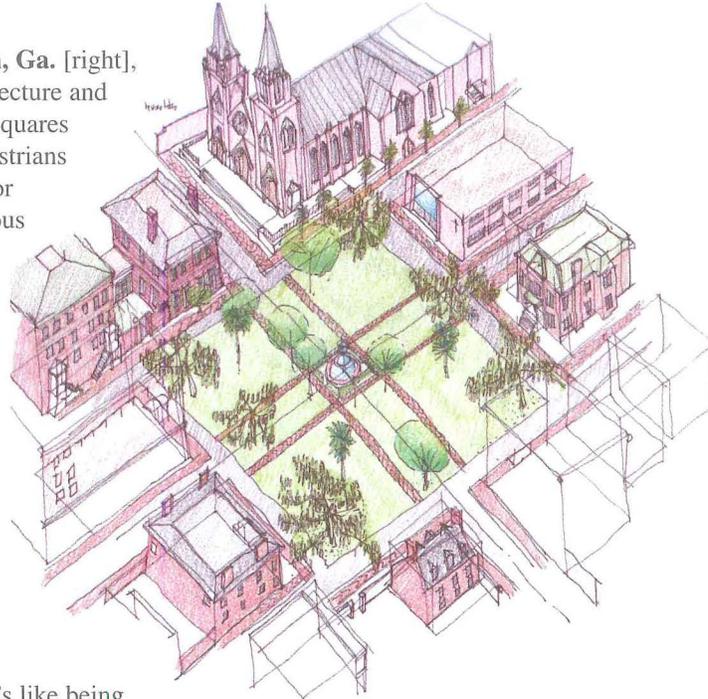
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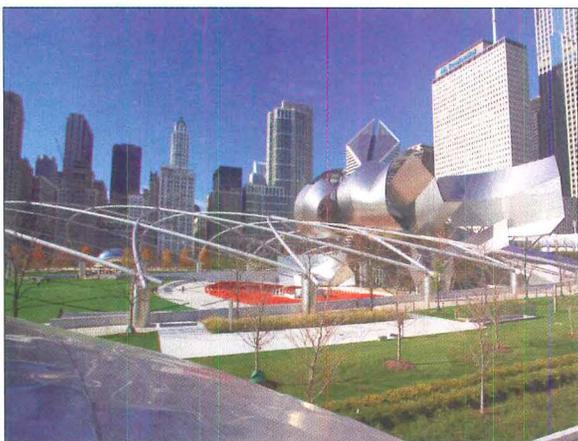
what's the most exciting architecture city right now?

"I was excited to find **Savannah, Ga.** [right], such an interesting city of architecture and urban planning. The municipal squares and street grid subtly favor pedestrians over vehicular traffic. Each major urban square features an ingenious urban planning gesture called the "truss lot"—a double lot reserved for religious or municipal use. These churches and civic buildings become destination points and vertical landmarks."—**John Burke, AIA, Studio27 Architecture, Washington, D.C.**

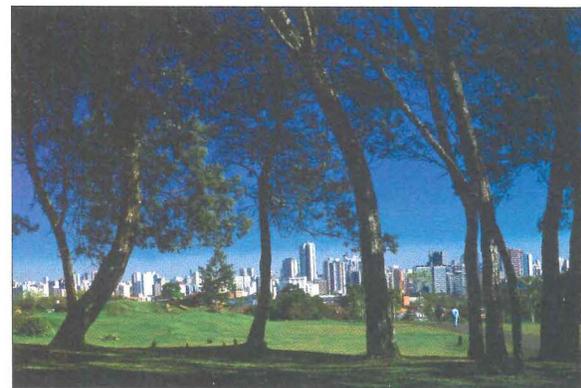


"**Paris** combines adventurous new architecture within a great historical context. People respect the old, but they are not afraid of the new. I also like that the average person there has an opinion about architecture. One of my favorite buildings is the Bibliothèque nationale de France [above] by Dominique Perrault—every cab driver not only knows the building but is very proud of and knowledgeable about it."—**John Brown, housebrand, Calgary, Alberta**

"My favorite is **Chicago** [below]. It's like being inside a museum of architecture, with Sullivan, Holabird & Root, Wright, Mies, Harry Weese, Bertrand Goldberg, SOM, Gehry, Koolhaas, and Piano. In a way, modern architecture was invented here."—**Xavier Vendrell, Xavier Vendrell Studio, Chicago/Barcelona, Spain**



"**São Paulo, Brazil**; all the styles live peacefully together. It has an energy unlike any other. A good example is the modernist Ibirapuera Park [right] designed in the early 1950s by architect Oscar Niemeyer and landscape artist Burle Marx."—**Márcio Kogan, Márcio Kogan Architects, São Paulo, Brazil**



Rendering: Courtesy John Burke, AIA; Photos (clockwise from top right): Courtesy Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France); Christian Knepper/Embratur (Ibirapuera Park); and City of Chicago/Chris McGuire (Jay Pritzker Pavilion by Gehry Partners)

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