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THE LOFTSTYLE GUIDE TO LIFE IN THE CITY

- *Cold Wine + Hot Iron = Good Times*
- *Nashville Takes the LEED*
- *CO₂: Counted and Recapped*
- *Best Books on City Life*
- *All Dividers Are Not Equal*

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**INSIDE THIS LIGHT FILLED
LIVE/WORK HAVEN** PAGE 46

EXCLUSIVE:

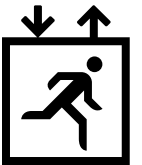
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MUSIC SPACE** PAGE 56



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LETTER



It's that time again—back to school. There's a universal urge to sharpen pencils and buy new shoes in hopes of starting strong. In this issue, we've let academic nostalgia get the best of us.

That meant hunting down the people who have decided to live the school life—literally. Across the country, vacant school buildings are being converted into residential loft homes at record numbers. The forward thinkers in “Back to School” (p. 34) live in some of the most adaptable spaces we've ever seen to date. From Washington D.C. to Atlanta, locker-lined hallways, former gyms, and old home-rooms now accommodate a modern lifestyle.

We've also branched out into uncharted territory: the music world. Chicago-based sensation Wilco, a steady indie-rock favorite for the past decade, let us inside their loft-turned-recording studio for an exclusive tour (p. 56).

We think lead singer Jeff Tweedy is spot on when he says “the nature of my musical interest is to be pretty curious and to shift.”

Have time for a pop quiz? Go to “Carbon Counts” (p. 11) and see how your carbon emissions can add up. We took the test ourselves and were amazed to discover how easy it is to minimize our carbon footprints. Then, find out how our cities created the messes (and, in some cases, successes) they are in today, with “The Urban Canon” (p. 16), our guide to essential urban planning books.

But, don't worry. We need recess break too, or at least our version of it. Like always, we bring you pages of exclusive looks into incredible lofts from around the world. Highlights include the functionally chic loft home of the Hoebbers in Philadelphia (p. 46) and the internationally cultivated Manhattan abode of renowned designer Valerie Pasquiou (p. 64) who embodies casual elegance.

And of course, there's the stuff we want. Our “Wanted” section is full of these current, fresh trends: nailhead embellished upholstery, decorations in shades of gray, and wiry furnishings. On our end, we want an item that fits in a category of its own. It's “The Bamboo” bike by Ross Lovegrove for Biomega. The bike took three years to produce, a striking example of ambition, especially for a design that is more statement than practical. But think about it: what if you used this to commute to your daily grind? Give it some thought.



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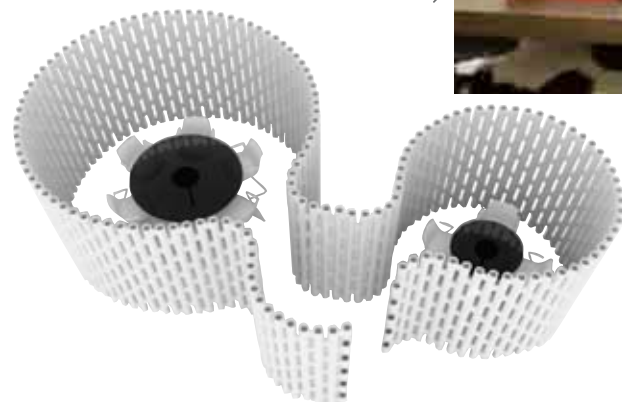
No longer "that same old
place"—sweet home Chicago.

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Seattleite of Love.



ON THE COVER: An inside look of the Hoebbers' Philadelphia loft, photography by Todd Mason.



Consciously cool.

modernfan.com



BOARD OF EXPERTS



LoftLife consults with our hand-picked team of design professionals and loft enthusiasts to keep us honest (and interesting).

SHERRY JO WILLIAMS

Design Expert/Teacher/Author



From Clodagh, Ross + Williams to Design Within Reach, Sherry Jo can always be found at the heart of NYC design.

PATRICIA GRAY

Interior Designer



Vancouver, BC-based & feng-shui certified, Patricia's firm, Patricia Gray, Inc., is recognized around the world.

DAVID HAY

Writer



David, NYC-based playwright & architecture columnist, is a master at explaining how design affects our daily lives.

JIM HACKLER

The Urbane Environmentalist



Jim, a freelance writer based in Atlanta, covers environmental issues at [theurbaneenvironmentalist](#) & [loftlifemag](#) (both .com).

JON STRASSNER

Ergonomic/Sustainable Leader



Jon, a LEED-accredited professional & ergonomics expert, is Director of A & D for Humanscale.

MARCEL SCHREUDER

Industrial Designer



Marcel, a Dutch native, is a managing partner & founder of Amsterdam's Springtime, an industrial design firm.

PAUL KOELEMAN

Graphic Designer/Photographer



Truly cross-continental: from Bloomingdale's to the Dutch National Ballet, Paul resides both in Amsterdam & Ceriana, Italy.

DEIRDRE ZAHL

Graphic Artist/Web Designer



Specializing in web design & print media for fashion designers, Deirdre now resides with her husband in Charleston, SC.

STEVEN BURGERT

Design Entrepreneur



Co-founder (with Anthony Almaguer) of the lifestyle showroom, I.D., in Chicago. Their design mantra? "Live Who You Are."

Illustrations by Graham Smith

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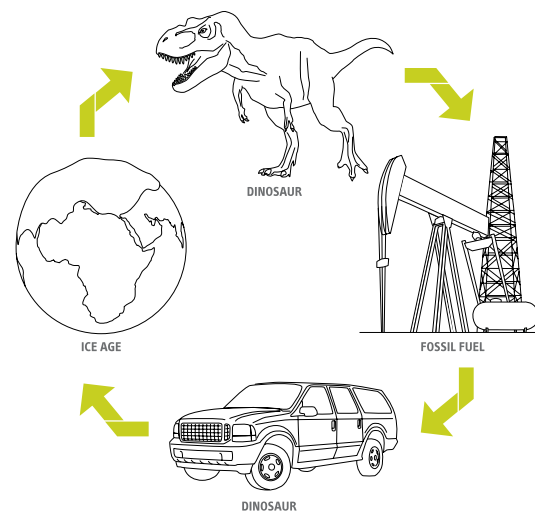


durour headboard, loft silk, in eggplant, noita in purple/berry, sateen solid in pear, franklin weave in spice, tribeca velvet in crimson, asbury in wine

groundworks AT LEEJOFA

Carbon Counts

LoftLife takes a deep breath and adds up all the CO₂ for you, by pound, by percentage, by ton, . . .



In the US alone, buildings account for:

- 72%** of electricity consumption,
- 39%** of energy use,
- 38%** of all CO₂ emissions,
- 40%** of raw materials use,
- 30%** of waste output (136 million tons a year),
- 14%** of potable water consumption.

(usgbc.org)

The average American's footprint emits **27 tons** of CO₂ in one year.

(Austin Monthly, April 2009)

MOST WALKABLE US CITIES:

1. San Francisco, CA
2. New York, NY
3. Boston, MA
4. Chicago, IL
5. Philadelphia, PA
6. Seattle, WA
7. Washington, DC
8. Long Beach, CA
9. Los Angeles, CA
10. Portland, OR

Walk Score ranks 2,508 neighborhoods in the largest 40 US cities so you can find the most walkable place to live.

(walkscore.com)

12% of all transportation emissions, the amount airplanes are responsible for.

(Austin Monthly, April 2009)

19.4 lbs amount of CO₂ emissions for every gallon of gasoline used.

(epa.gov)

Number of LEED-certified buildings:

CHICAGO **70** SEATTLE **55** NYC **41**
LA **32** PHILLY **16**

(New York magazine, May 2009)

HEMP-LIME (hemp-lahym) *n.* a lightweight composite building material made of fibers from the fast-growing hemp plant and bound together using a lime-based adhesive. **The new zero carbon house is a cannabis house.** Growing hemp stores carbon + lime's low carbon footprint & efficient insulating properties = **'better than zero carbon footprint.'**

(sciencedaily.com)

A STANDARD 60-W LIGHT BULB EMITS 21 LBS OF CO₂ IN ITS LIFETIME.

(ct.gov)

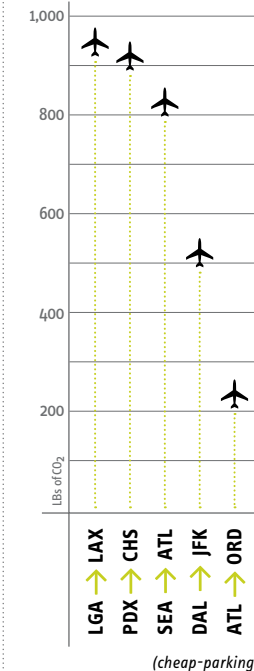
How LoftLife's carbon footprint measures out:

ATL LL staff average of CO₂ emissions: **27 tons**
NY LL staff average of CO₂ emissions: **20 tons**
LL staff average of CO₂ emissions: **23 tons**

Calculate your own carbon footprint at: nature.org/initiatives/climatechange

Illustration by Frank Gargione

CALCULATED EMISSIONS BY AIR TRAVEL



(cheap-parking.net)

40%

or more of your home's heat is lost through poorly insulated walls & ceilings.

(bp.com)

Average cost to have your heels replaced in:

- NYC**
\$9 WOMEN'S / \$23 MEN'S
- Chicago**
\$12 WOMEN'S / \$17 MEN'S
- Atlanta**
\$9 WOMEN'S / \$18 MEN'S
- Houston**
\$10 WOMEN'S / \$20 MEN'S
- Portland**
\$11 WOMEN'S / \$19 MEN'S
- Seattle**
\$9 WOMEN'S / \$16 MEN'S
- LA**
\$8 WOMEN'S / \$13 MEN'S
- Philadelphia**
\$10 WOMEN'S / \$12 MEN'S

no limits in space

London Eye · United Kingdom



Sofa, from \$2,699, as shown, \$3,699.
Imola chair, from \$2,199, as shown \$2,499.
Coffee table, \$1,199.

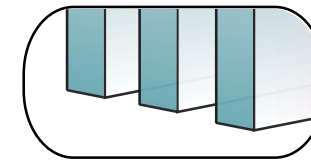
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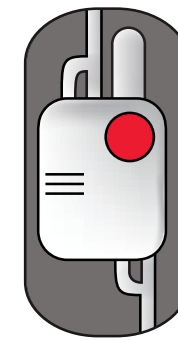
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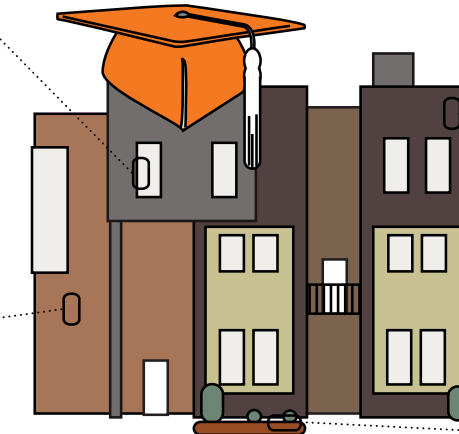
CA: San Diego, San Francisco • CT: Milford • DC: Georgetown • FL: Jacksonville, Tampa • HI: Honolulu • IL: Chicago • MA: Cambridge
NJ: Edgewater, Paramus, Princeton • NY: Carle Place, Chelsea, DUMBO, Madison Ave, Scarsdale, SoHo, Upper East Side • PA: Philadelphia
TX: Austin, Dallas, Houston • VA: Tysons Corner • WA: Seattle • CANADA: Vancouver.



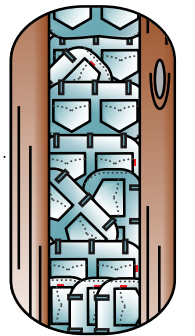
Triple-pane windows are the extra credit on this already expertly insulated project.



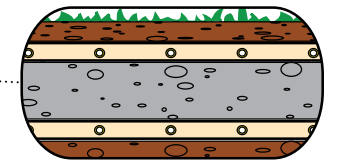
The tankless, on-demand water heater runs on natural gas and has a lifespan of 25 years.



Lawrence Bros. spared landfills 50-75% of the standard amount of waste content for a building this size.



Blue jeans (repurposed) combined with paper (recycled) become safe, effective, low-cost insulation.



Stormwater runs off into rain gardens layered with dirt, gravel, mulch, and filter fabric.

Genius in a Building

Jeff Gowdy investigates Morgan Park Place's new standards for water and energy conservation in residential design.

Although it's still appealing to "vote" with your pocketbook for the environment and there's no shortage of companies selling sustainability, 'green marketing' has become so much white noise. Take real estate.

There's a flurry of mixed messages about 'low impact homes,' 'eco-lofts,' and green residences of every LEED-certified stripe, yet there's little detail on their actual environmental and financial benefits—which can cause a bit of a marketing problem for many developers. The Lawrence Bros., LLC, of Nashville, seeing only opportunity, have taken it upon themselves to make their mixed-use development, Morgan Park Place, a community rich in quantifiable environmental savings.

A mix of retail and lofts that combine modern convenience with conservation, Morgan Park Place is the first development in Tennessee to achieve EarthCraft House certification, which covers site planning, building

materials, waste management, air quality, and water and energy usage. (They're currently undergoing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification as well.)

According to owner and operator Skip Lawrence: "It's important for the consumer to be able to identify and qualify genuine green products and services" from those that aren't. A typical savings of \$400 this year alone is certainly enough for Morgan Park Place residents to "identify and qualify."

The Lawrence Bros. have created savings in energy usage through innovative and subtle techniques: recycled paper and blown-in cellulose made from old blue jeans make up part of the insulation; a white roof surface reflects heat in the summer and reduces each unit's demand for air-conditioning; and their Energy Recovery Ventilation system boosts HVAC efficiency. Overall, these and other decisions have saved all 40 units more than 65,000 kW hours per year.

With regard to water conservation, Morgan Park Place saves three million gallons per year through a variety of clever strategies. Inside each unit are tankless, on-demand natural gas water heaters that provide 8.5 gallons of continuous hot water per minute and are meant to last 25 years. Outside, pervious concrete parking areas direct stormwater runoff into gardens constructed with infiltration layers—causing zero synthetic fertilizer runoff.

Clearly Morgan Park Place stands up as a model to those seeking true leadership in energy and environmental design. And Lawrence Bros., LLC, do understand the value that certifications carry, but first and foremost, they're interested in bringing the real value of 'green' to residents.

While 'green marketing' continues to dump more white noise into the saturated marketplace, the Lawrence brothers are the bright ray of color literally building the future of sustainable, affordable residential living.

Illustration by Vincent Sacco



Jonathan Adler

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Photography by Andrew Giammarco



The Urban Canon

We've assembled an urban planning syllabus for those looking to fit some extra credit into the course load of life.

THE PHAIDON ATLAS OF 21ST CENTURY WORLD ARCHITECTURE (2008) is for both serious and armchair architects. This weighty survey—selected by expert advisors, illustrated with photographs and blueprints, and presented with statistical data from each of the six world regions examined—displays 1,037 of the world's "best buildings" constructed since January 2000.

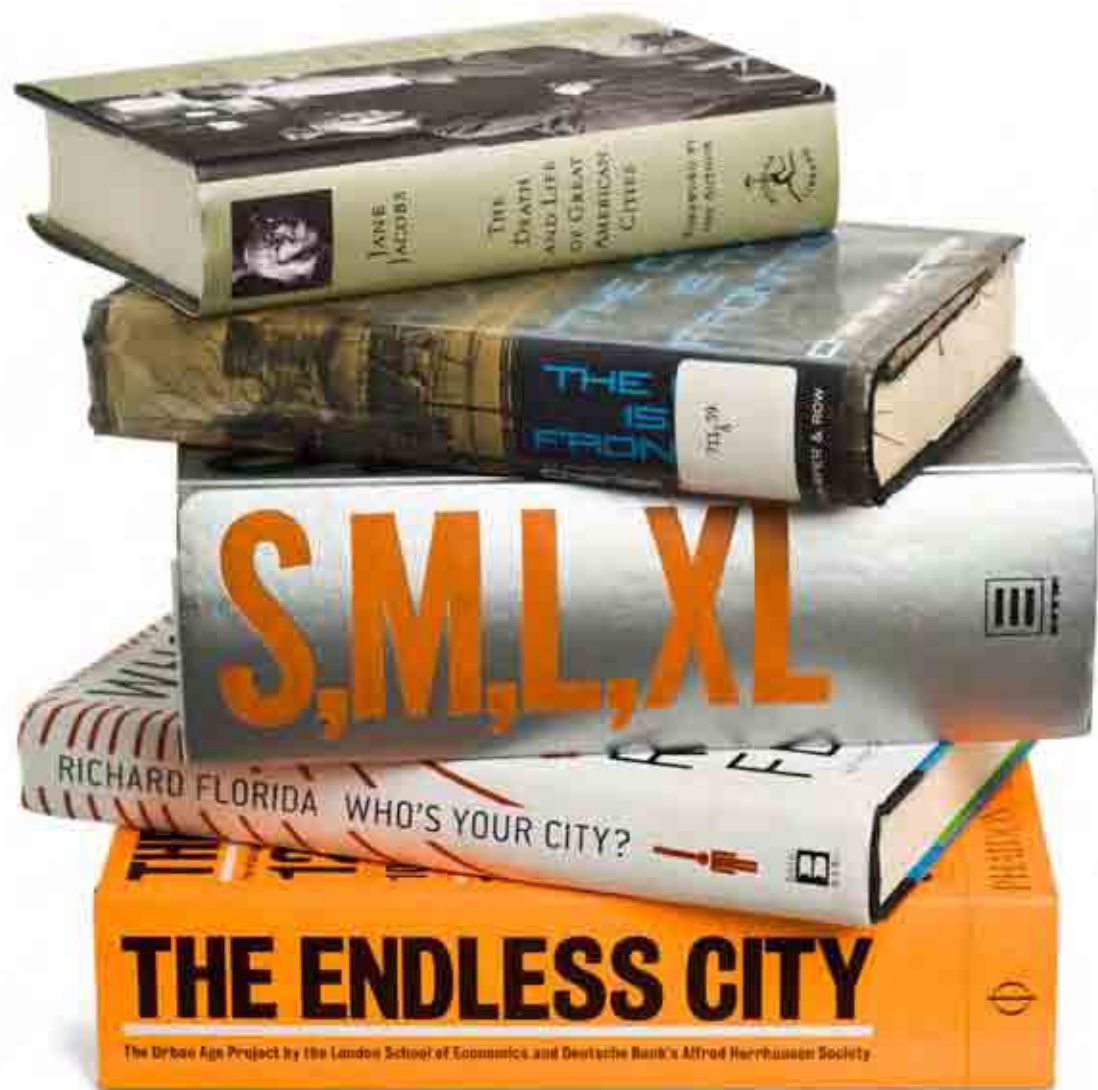
"Rarely," writes Kate Ascher in her knowing, 2005 **THE WORKS: ANATOMY OF A CITY**, "does a resident of any of the world's great metropolitan areas pause to consider the complexity of urban life or the myriad systems that operate around the clock to support it." She then goes on to explore, with spot-on illustrations, the "deceptively simple" machinations that keep us—and our cities—running.

Back in 1969, Mel Scott's **AMERICAN CITY PLANNING SINCE 1809** expressed a prescient "concern for the quality of life" that served as a "counterforce to the facile production of carbon-copy neighborhoods, identical supermarkets, uniform playgrounds, and cliché office buildings." A must for anyone interested in reasserting the "primacy of the individual" in city environments.

James Howard Kunstler's **THE CITY IN MIND: NOTES ON THE URBAN CONDITION**, published in 2002, travels across the world and over time to "redirect . . . a pretty incoherent national discussion about how we live, to survey how history regards urban living arrangements, and to discern what kinds of choices and predicaments the future may present to us."

Le Corb's 1946 **LOOKING AT CITY PLANNING** did for urban planners what his *Towards a New Architecture* did for architects. And again, the iconic *maitre* is in fine form, railing: "The modern industrial radio-centric city is a flourishing cancer!"

John W. Reps, now Professor Emeritus at Cornell University, wrote the epic, *The Making of Urban America* in 1965. "To make urban planning available to a wider audience," he (and Princeton University Press) published the smaller **TOWN PLANNING IN FRONTIER AMERICA**,



which “limited the scope to city plans prepared before the middle of the 19th Century, beginning in 1565 at St. Augustine.”

In 1961, Jane Jacobs’s seminal **THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES** served as a rebuttal to the earlier writings of Le Corbusier and as a prophetic warning against those who, like her nemesis, Robert Moses, “cling to the unexamined assumptions that they are dealing with a problem in the physical sciences.”

When most people were looking to the moon in the 60s, Charles Abrams, backed by the Ford Foundation, was writing **THE CITY IS THE FRONTIER** (published in 1965). Abrams saw cities as a “confluence of diversities” for “those who seek the fringes and those who will settle for nothing less than the collision of minds in

an ever-changing medley of faces and people,” and he lashed out at the government’s inability to provide proper low-income housing.

“If Bigness transforms architecture, its accumulation generates a new kind of city,” writes Rem Koolhaas in his Bruce Mau-designed 1,376-page, 6-lb. tome, **S, M, L, XL** (1st ed., 1995; edition shown: 1997). Although a tad dated in our scaled-back economy, this collection of essays, photographs, sketches, and doodles from 20 years of design by the Dutch architect’s Rotterdam-based Office for Metropolitan Architecture, is a snapshot into the scattershot mind of one of contemporary architecture’s greatest ambassadors.

WHO’S YOUR CITY? asks Richard Florida, the man who invented the notion of a “creative class.”

Subtitled, “How the Creative Economy is Making Where You Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life,” the book has been considered elitist by some, but it’s full of fresh data regarding which cities people choose to live in and which cities people have chosen to leave. (It was also a hotly debated book club choice among the staff here at *LoftLife*.)

Consider this: 10% of the world’s population lived in cities in 1900; 50% live in cities as of 2007; and 75% is the estimate for the year 2050. This is just one of thousands of facts you’ll plumb in **THE ENDLESS CITY**, a big and beautifully designed compendium published in 2008 by Phaidon, featuring contributors from The Urban Age Project by the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank’s Alfred Herrhausen Society.



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From 1871-1889 Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo crisscrosses Europe before settling in Venice with a family whose artistic lineage inspires his future endeavors.



Fortuny discovers light's dramatic potential. In 1897, his painting, *The Flower Girls*, wins the gold medal at the Munich International Festival of Art.



Fortuny patents an indirect theatrical lighting system in 1901, which leads to one of his first inventions: the dimmer switch, used for the opera *Francesca da Rimini*.

Fortuny Moda Lamp

The story of a latter-day Renaissance man, the stages he set, and the course for lighting he designed.



Fortuny, favorite of Peggy Guggenheim and Sarah Bernhardt, creates finely pleated silk 'Delphos gown' (sans a corset!) in 1909.



Research in his attic studio leads to the 1904 treatise, *Éclairage scénique: Système Fortuny*. "It is not the quantity, but the quality of light that makes things visible."



Already a lighting technician and inventor, Fortuny moves into fashion design with his Knossos Scarf (1906), inspired by ancient Greece.



With over 20 patents during his lifetime, Fortuny designs silk lamps inspired by Arabic motifs and Chinese lanterns.

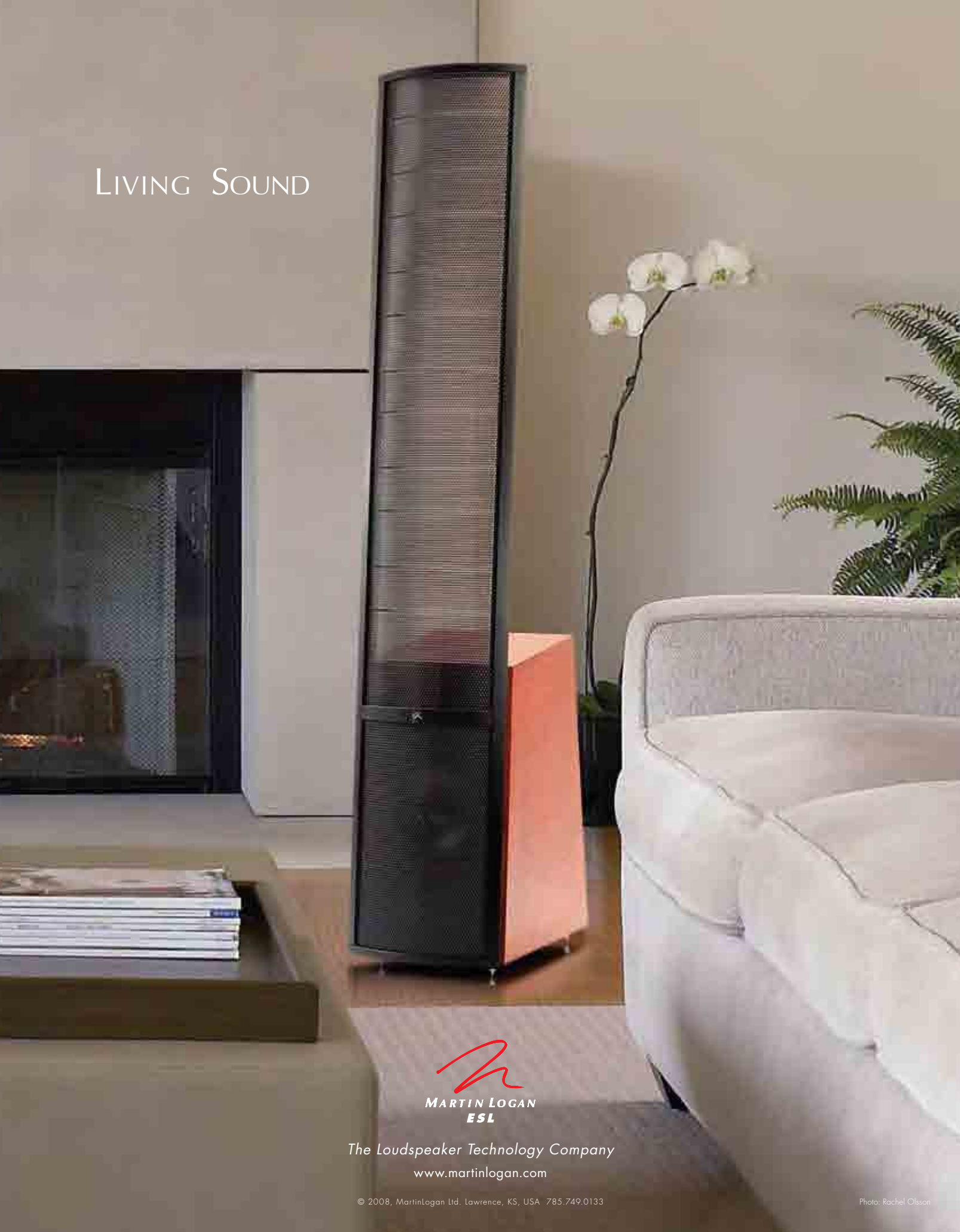


In 1985 Pallucco Italia steers the 'Fortuny Moda' manufacturing, so its "classic design drama" can still be enjoyed by contemporary designers.



As fresh as it was 100 years ago, the Italian inventor's most celebrated masterpiece is carried today by DWR and YLighting.

LIVING SOUND

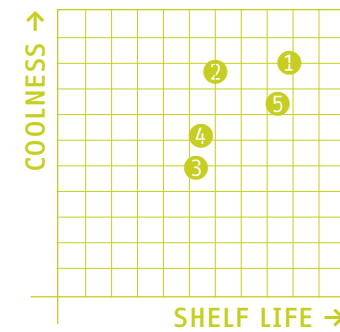


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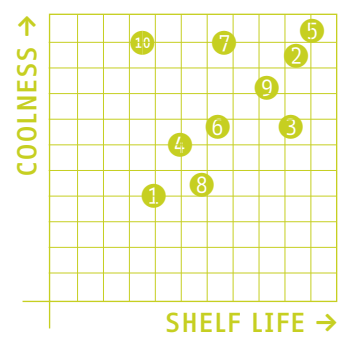
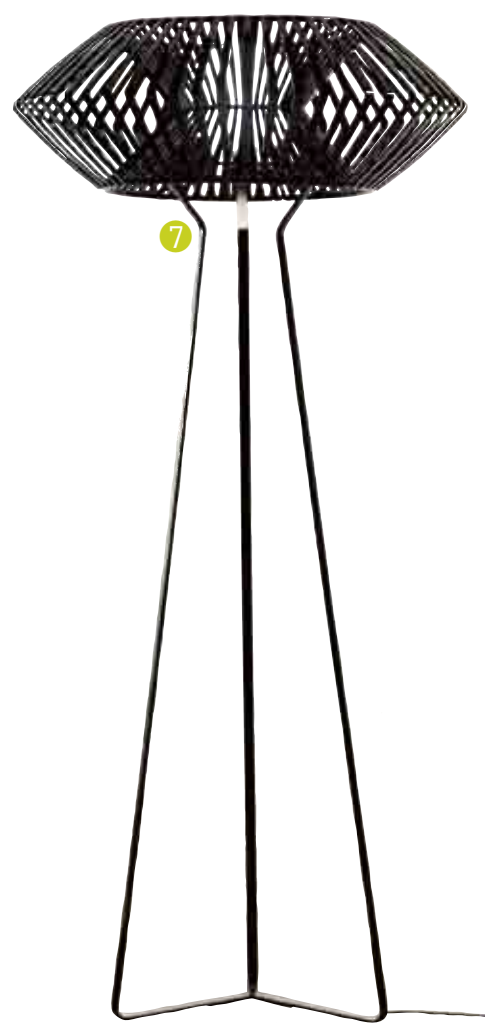
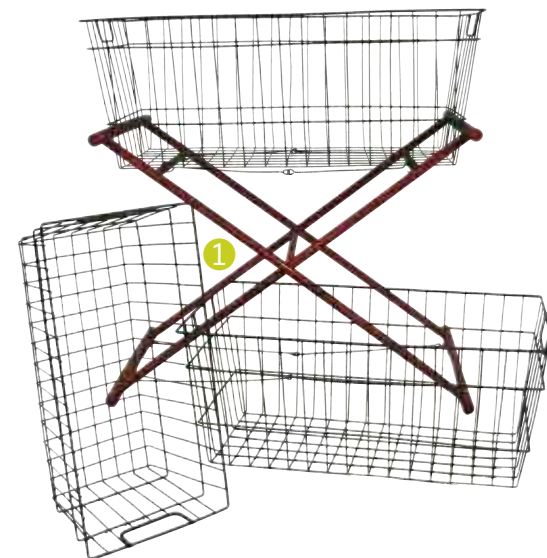
Photo: Rachel Olsson

WANTED



Studly Do-Right

① For a contemporary take on the Regency style, look to the Thomas Pheasant Collection's **Luxe Bed** from Baker. 46.75" x 76" x 91.5"; price upon request; baker.kohlerinteriors.com ② The **Lisbon Occasional Chair** features burnt-orange leather upholstery with a hardwood frame, a combination sure to make a statement. 32.75" x 30" x 26"; \$2,111; palecek.com ③ Handcrafted in Italy, this black, porcelain **Large Vase** is embellished with a nailhead motif that adds to its Medieval aesthetic. 21.75" x 12" x 12"; price upon request; baker.kohlerinteriors.com ④ Antique nailheads create an angular pattern bordering the plush **Tangier Hassock** ottoman. 15" (h) x 30" (d); price upon request; michaelbermanlimited.com ⑤ The geometric "**Hakam**" **Console Table**, designed by Southern talent Barry Dixon, is long enough for a banquet. 30" x 72.5" x 20.5"; price upon request; tomlinsonerwinlambeth.com

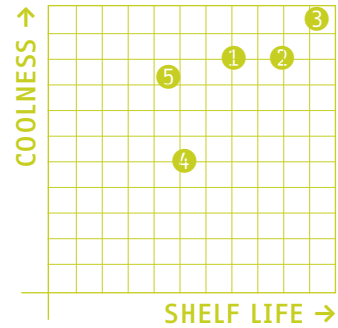


It's a Thin Line . . .

① A trio of steel **Laundry Baskets with Red Wood Stand** adds some industrial-chic to your dirty laundry. 21" x 28" x 18"; \$151; homealamode.com ② Designed by Finnish interior architect Seppo Koho, the handmade **Octo 4240** pendant light consists of laminated birch slats that are curved into a bell shape by highly skilled craftspeople. 26.8" (h) x 21.26" (ø); price upon request; sectodesign.fi ③ Arik Levy's **Zanotta Bigwire Table**, a painted steel structure (shown in red), has an 8-mm-thick tempered plate glass top. 51.2" (ø); \$3,054; unicahome.com ④ Part of Patricia Urquiola's metal furnishings line, the **Re-Trouvé** chair, shown in powdercoated red with a lime green cushion, is a whimsical take on traditional garden sets. 41" x 30" x 24"; \$850; conranusa.com ⑤ Inspired by the simplicity of a paper clip, Tom Dixon's **Wire Coatrack** is sold in two-foot segments to allow for expansion. 27" x 26" x 6"; \$350; dwr.com ⑥ Designer Jaime Hayón

was "inspired by suits of armor, helmets, and fencing masks" when he created his **Grid Vases** (shown in copper). Round: 14.5" x 13.3"; Cylindrical: 9.6" x 19.8"; from \$970; unicahome.com ⑦ The Arturo Alavez **V Floor Lamp** designed by Hector Serran casts an hourglass illusion when lit; constructed with polycarbonate straps that attach to upper and lower metallic rings which form the hi-tech shade. 68.25" (h) x 31.5" (ø); \$4,226; ylighting.com ⑧ Yellow powdercoated wire is woven into durable drum shapes, making the affordable **Hive Side Table** a must. 17" (h) x 10" (ø); \$45; cb2.com ⑨ Rest your drink on the marble top of the **Silhouette Spot Table** and marvel at its steel hourglass base. 20" (h) x 16" (ø); price upon request; baker.kohlerinteriors.com ⑩ Moldable wire dyed in bright colors form **Wire Spun Tapers**—sure to brighten any meal, indoor or *al fresco*. Ranging from 2.25"-17.25" x 4-4.5"; \$24-\$36; anthropologie.com

WANTED



Gray Anatomies

① Get a “dreamy glow” with this **Organza Large Pendant** that uses an airy fabric shade to create subtle illumination. 18” (h) x 24” (ø); \$349; roomandboard.com ② The **Napoleon Cabinet** features an antique gray finish and hardware that will give any modern space a touch of French country living. 37” x 47” x 19”; \$1,795; jaysonhomeandgarden.com ③ The new work of David Weeks, inspired by the peaks and slopes of topographical maps, includes the **Sculpt sofa**, characterized by an asymmetrical shape and stainless steel frame. 10’ long; \$15,000; ralphpucci.net ④ Made of rayon covered recycled acid-free fiberboard, the **Bigso 2-Drawer Chest** is an environmentally sound way to organize. 5.8” x 13.2” x 10”; \$20; crateandbarrel.com ⑤ The Castiglioni brothers—Italian design duo *straordinario*—created the **Gatto Piccolo table lamp** in 1960; the moody, balloon-shaped light was reissued in 2005. 11.8” (h) x 7.5” (ø); \$380; mossonline.com

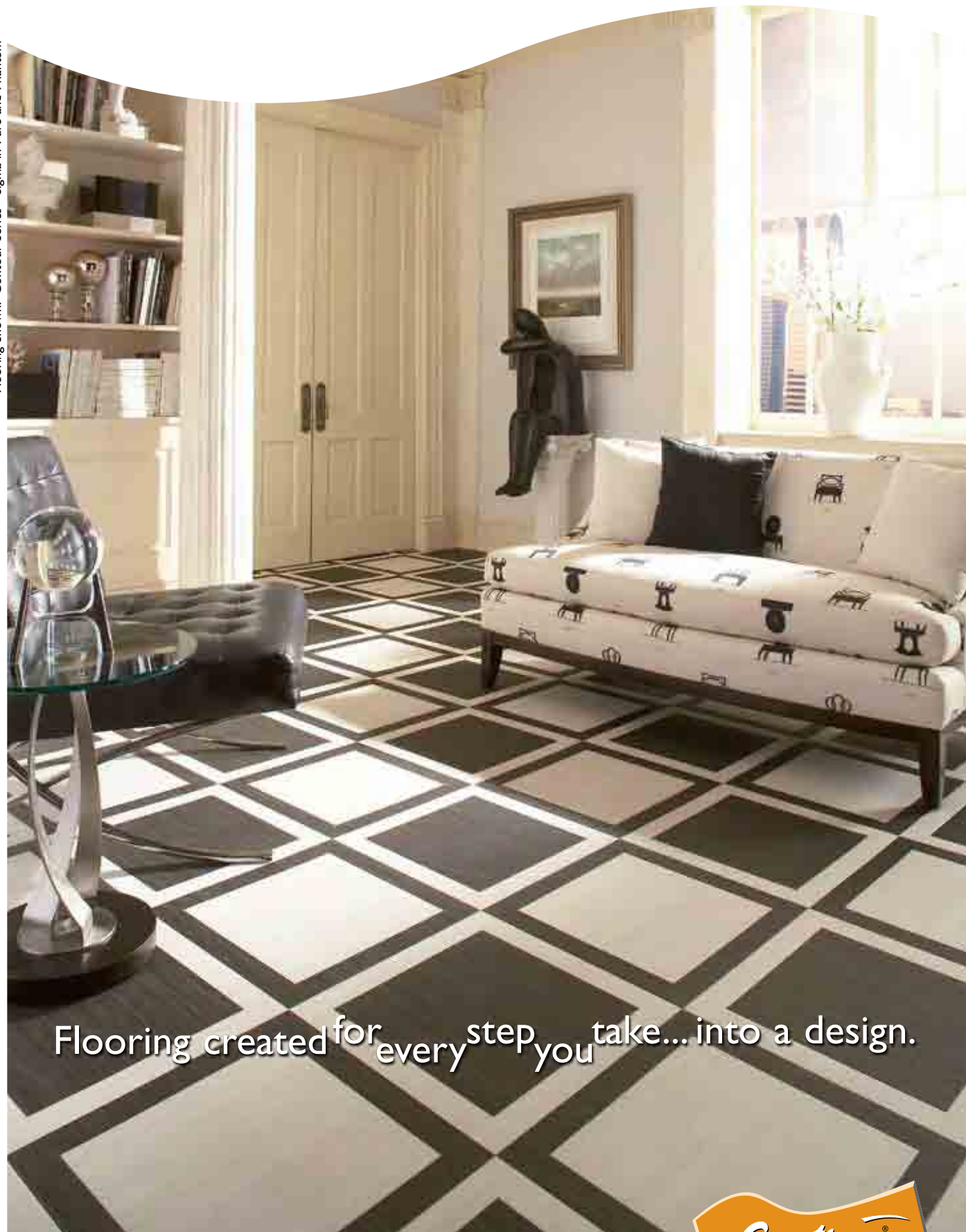
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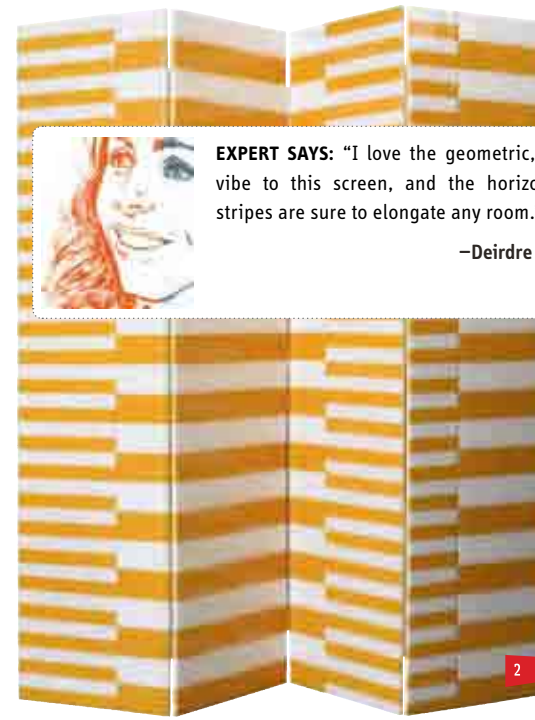
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EXPERT SAYS: "I love the geometric, 70s vibe to this screen, and the horizontal stripes are sure to elongate any room."
—Deirdre Zahl



EXPERT SAYS: "Can't see the forest from the foam? That's the effect of this Swedish solution. Much like a dark woodland, its mystery could be refreshing."
—Sherry Jo Williams

1 KORV Multiple foam cylinders work best as a custom installation. Designed by Form Us With Love. formuswithlove.se

2 RESIN SCREEN Resin-coated graphic stripes are laminated on a wood screen. Designed by Dan Bleier. danbleierstudio.com

3 VENTANA A telescoping 9-foot curtain of light that can be mounted on (or off) of the wall and pulled up or down by a chain like a window shade. Designed by Pablo Pardo. pablodesigns.com

4 TWIST AGAIN A felt curtain of strings that seems more like twisted seaweed, is more interactive than most typical wall dividers. Designed by Joe Velluto. joevelluto.it

The Great Divide

Want another wall to hang art? Need another room to house a friend? These sexy separators will do the trick.

EXPERT SAYS: "A unique design concept that . . . incorporates ambient white lighting in the down position and spot lighting in the up position."
—Patricia Gray



EXPERT SAYS: "A more stylish version of the kitschy, beaded curtain. Looks fun enough to stream from the back of a Mardi Gras float."
—Jim Hackler



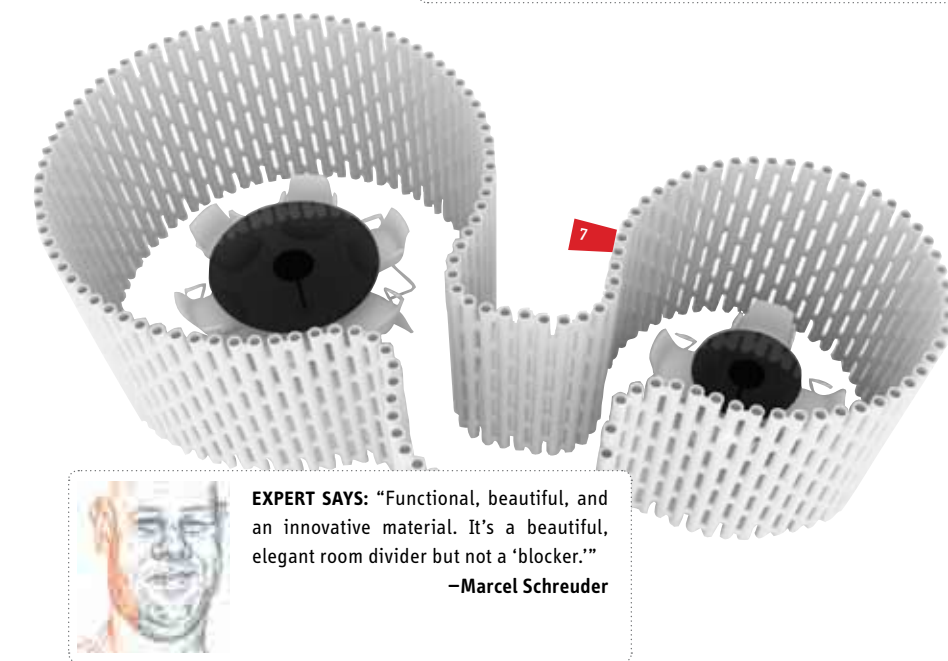
EXPERT SAYS: "Taking inspiration from nature, a honeycomb defines a bee's environment, and I love the modular aspect of this design."
 —Steven Burgert

5



6

EXPERT SAYS: "The way this 'screen' mocks the rigidity of more standard dividers makes it fun and exciting, and yet it still serves its purpose."
 —David Hay



7

EXPERT SAYS: "Functional, beautiful, and an innovative material. It's a beautiful, elegant room divider but not a 'blocker.'"
 —Marcel Schreuder



WICKER
 RATTAN
 LIGHTING
 IRON
 FINDS
 ALLWEATHER



5 MODULE "LA RUCHE" This set of 6, 12, or 24 modules comes in three color choices and was inspired by the traditional forms of Arab-Andalusian architecture. Designed by Mostapha El Oulhane for Darenart. darenart.com

EXPERT SAYS: "The individual components may make for many hours of do-it-yourself assembly, but the playful colors and texture add a sculptural drama."
 —Deirdre Zahl

6 HARDWOOD SCREEN Made from bars of plantation teak with an oil finish, each panel can be stretched and bent to any curvature by an elastic cord running through the many slats. Designed by Matt Gagnon. mattstudio.com

7 LINK Expanded polypropylene (EPP), a lightweight high-performance material traditionally used in the packaging and automotive industries, is reinvented for a wall of connectors. Designed by PearsonLloyd. pearsonlloyd.co.uk

8 NOMAD SYSTEM No hardware or tools are needed for this recycled, double wall of cardboard that comes in nine color choices. Designed by Jaime Salm and Roger Allen. mioculture.com



8

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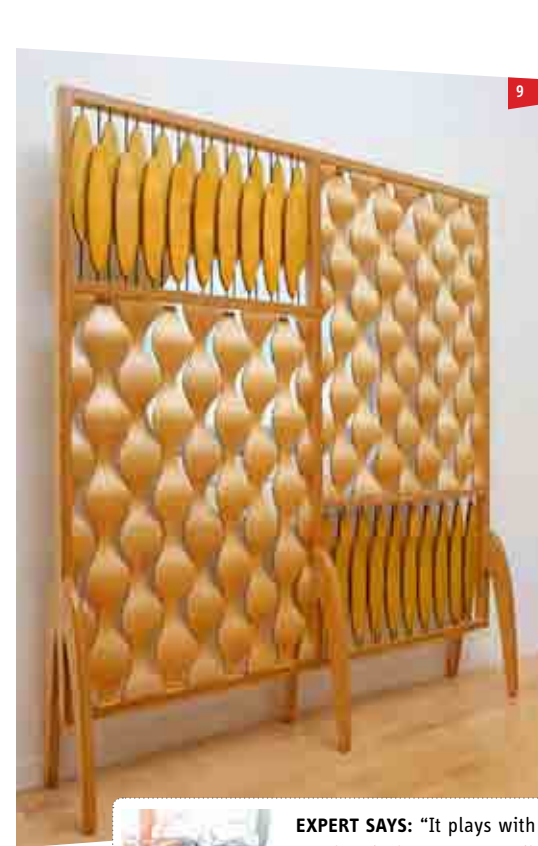
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9



EXPERT SAYS: "It plays with light without an electrical source. It's tribal and 50s at the same time."

—Paul Koeleman

9

OGGI SCREEN Almost more like an art installation, this birch plywood and steel room divider takes a modern approach to the typical Asian screen. Designed by Egawa + Zbryk. egawazbryk.com

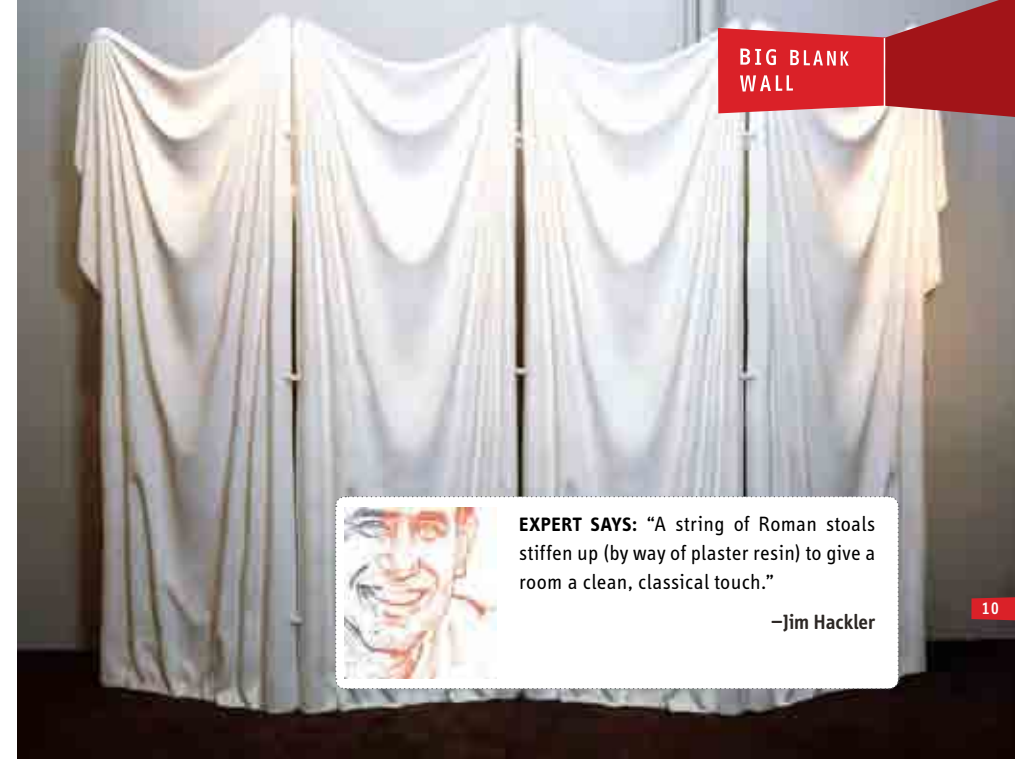


EXPERT SAYS: "This actually looks like it can separate a large space into different areas, and I like its 'serpentine feeling.'"

—David Hay



11



BIG BLANK WALL



EXPERT SAYS: "A string of Roman stools stiffen up (by way of plaster resin) to give a room a clean, classical touch."

—Jim Hackler

10

10

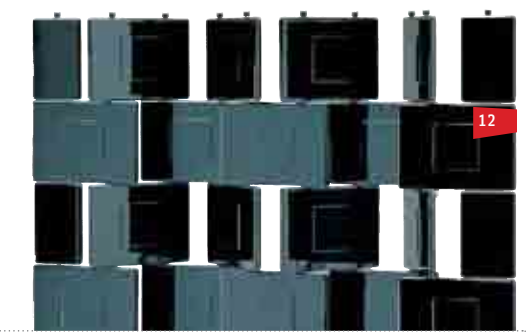
FIBERGLASS SCREEN Four panels, not of hanging cloth, but of plaster resin perform a trick of the eye. Designed by Marc Bankowsky. maisongerard.com

11

PAPER SOFTWALL A honeycomb structure of 400 lightweight tissue paper layers expands hundreds of times from its compressed size. Designed by Molo Design. molodesign.com

12

EILEEN GRAY BLOCK SCREEN A reproduction of Gray's 1922 classic: wood lacquered in black polyester and a high gloss finish. Currently designed by Bauhaus 2 Your House. bauhaus2yourhouse.com



12



EXPERT SAYS: "It's sculptural and it's as playful as a charthouse. It looks like it will collapse any second, but it's a timeless and never boring piece of moveables."

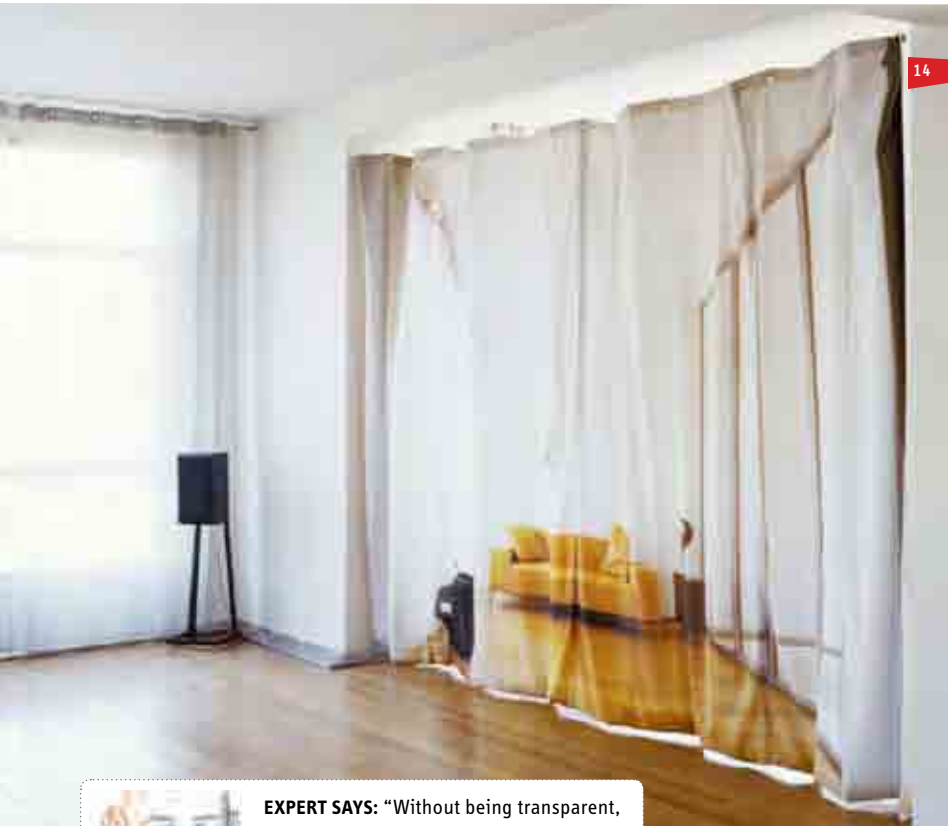
—Marcel Schreuder





EXPERT SAYS: "Although this reeks of 'modern,' I have a hunch this would work best in a traditional setting, where its colorful form would stand alone."
 —David Hay

13



EXPERT SAYS: "Without being transparent, this playful curtain suggests an open view. No more mess in your 'side room'. It's a nice cheater—just don't look behind."
 —Marcel Schreuder

14



EXPERT SAYS: "This willow branch divider is perfect for those frustrated nature-lovers who are serial houseplant killers."
 —Jim Hackler

15

13 PARAMETRE Available in three patterns: "mega," "hexa," and "quad" (shown "mega") and made from 100% polyester 3-D textile. Designed by 3form. 3-form.com

14 CURTAIN This life-sized "roomscape" enlarges any area and is a guaranteed conversation starter—or the next backdrop to your own theater production. Designed by Bauke Knottnerus. baukeknottnerus.nl

15 GRASSLANDS DIVIDER Handmade from authentic dried willows tied together, the 3-panel divider comes in bleached white or brown and in two heights. cobblersroad.com





Back to School

Abandoned old schools across the country are being seized for development and for a new adaptive lifestyle.



Story by Cindy Klinger and Kyra Shapurji

Photography by Tom Ackerman (Pierce School Lofts) and Amy Herr (Bass Lofts)

In the world of converted real estate, nothing is off limits. From garages and gas stations, to factories, and even, deserted churches, everything is being renovated for residential homes—and people are buying them. The most recent case of adaptive reuse that seems to have struck a cord with developers are none other than old schools.

Across the U.S., old schools have been sitting vacant for years with only pigeons to occupy the halls and rooms. Developers have recognized the opportunities that these old schools offer: revitalise neighborhoods, create communities, and provide quirky or whimsical elements in the actual spaces.

It's a win-win situation for both the city districts and the firms. The districts get to sell off unused land to hungry developers and the firms get a plethora of design possibilities. With nearly ten school loft developments, Washington D.C. caught on early to the trend (before it even was a trend) and is still moving forward with more proposed developments slated for the upcoming years, while other cities such as Atlanta, Buffalo,

and Worcester have joined D.C. in continuing the school fad.

The school lofts have no trouble selling. In fact, there are even wait lists before construction is complete and a near sell-out once they're officially placed on the market. One thing's for sure: school is back in session—year round.

Pierce School Lofts

For Chris Swanson and Jeff Printz it was the “TLC” factor that made them say “yes” to the Pierce School Lofts. Back in 1998 as owners of Evolve Property Management, they saw in the school a larger opportunity to give the building some true tender,

PREVIOUS PAGE: Evolve Property Management made sure to keep Pierce School's exterior in tact and authentic. **With 20 “rooms”** including the entrance, Swanson's loft has enough room for a theater, a kitchen that seats 27, and a “Grand Hall” with 16 chandeliers. **The attic** has been transformed into a gallery space where guests can meditate on art.



“We had a fascination with the ‘true loft lifestyle.’ We wanted the classic charm of the exterior and the adaptive reuse qualities that only a school loft can offer.”

loving, care, by purchasing the entire building. Swanson says, “We had a fascination with the ‘true loft lifestyle.’ And in Washington D.C., there’s not a lot of industrial spaces because it’s so white-collar. We wanted the classic charm of the exterior and the adaptive reuse qualities that only a school loft can offer.”

The Pierce School Lofts went through a couple transformations before it ended up in Swanson’s and Printz’s hands. It was first a school built in 1893, and then a homeless shelter, and then the building sat vacant for 12 years until Swanson and Printz stepped in. Before they could start their renovation project, they had to remove some “tenants” that had moved in during the vacancy. About 2,000 pigeons had settled in through the attic hatch door that had been left open, which meant removing five full dumpsters of pigeon poop, the worst part of the debacle, according to Swanson.

Working without any interior designers, the pair set out to restore many of the historic aspects that had initially appealed to them. First, they made sure to keep the heart of the school: 116-year-old hard wood floors made from Virginia red pine trees. Then, they added flags and clocks to preserve the “old school charm,” and at the same time, they also had to completely restore the roof, so it wouldn’t collapse in on itself.

Before they set out to spend the \$2,000,000 over the course of two years for restoration and renovation, they made sure to hold true to the “Three Core Rules (to Adapting a Loft)”: One, don’t divide the space with walls. Two, if there’s an architectural element, then leave it, even if it’s broken. And three, if you add an element, either make it look like the original, or go in the opposite direction.

☑ In the “Music Conservatory” room, the real bones of the school are evident with the 116-year-old floors, the exposed brick walls, and the radiators. While the piano is a sculptural piece, the walls do echo the sounds of Roberta Flack, a former music teacher who used the space.



“When I have the opportunity to acquire an entire view, I take it seriously because it’s something that can’t be reproduced.”

Opposite page photography by Tom Ackerman, this page photography by Paul Burk

They’ve left a few lofts open to renters but have settled right into their 9,000-square-foot space of the school, also known as “Hotel Maryland Avenue” where their guests have the chance to pick and choose a room of their choice, a perk that most D.C. hotels don’t even offer.

Bryan School Lofts

For Jim Abdo, president and CEO of Abdo Development, the Bryan School Lofts had the location and time of “pioneering change.” Taking on the project for Abdo was a no-brainer, since he’s made a name for himself in Washington D.C. as a developer that relishes in adaptive reuse projects to help move the city forward.

But for Abdo, the real reason he took Bryan School Lofts under his company’s wing comes down to one thing—the view. With close proximity to Capital Hill and the Eastern Market, the school is the tallest structure and on the highest

point in the city, right in the middle of the national historic district. Abdo explains, “The views are forever. You can’t place a value to the view. When I have the opportunity to acquire an entire view, I take it seriously because it’s something that can’t be reproduced.”

After closing up as a school around 90 years ago, Abdo had the idea to build only 20 lofts, so that the volumetric bones of the building could remain almost completely intact. While other developers vying for the project wanted to create 30 to 40 lofts, Abdo realized with less lofts, the individual spaces would maintain a more accurate feel and idea of those long lost school days. Larger lofts mimic the former classrooms’

☑ The Bryan School Lofts have four floors, and the penthouse level has four units, each with a private 950-square-foot terrace. ☑ One of the 20 loft units displays perfectly the “delicate balance” of historic structure and cutting-edge design that Abdo Development intentionally worked hard on to create.



The campus-like vibe is heightened by the neighborhood's funky feel and the sense of community, which residents truly appreciate.

abundant light. Abdo was also adamant to keep intact the large staircases originally designed to accommodate thousands of students. Despite being five times larger than code requirements, Abdo saw the staircases as “the storytellers” of the school’s history. “The stone staircases are worn down and most display the true story of the space, that of the students.”

Other smaller elements Abdo preserved include signs for separate boys’ and girls’ entrances and the original columns and pediments. Century-old plaster was chiseled away to expose the original brick and wooden “nailers” for chalkboards. With these quirky characteristics intact, the Bryan School Lofts began to come together as Abdo had envisioned.

Most developers would consider more loft space for less units a risk, but it was a risk that Abdo was willing to take. After 16 months of restoration, his gamble started to pay off, and the opportunities began to unfold. The governor of New Jersey rented one of the penthouses for two years, international news organizations inquired to “rent the view” as the backdrop for their journalists, and currently, all the loft spaces are occupied—the truest testament to the view’s power.

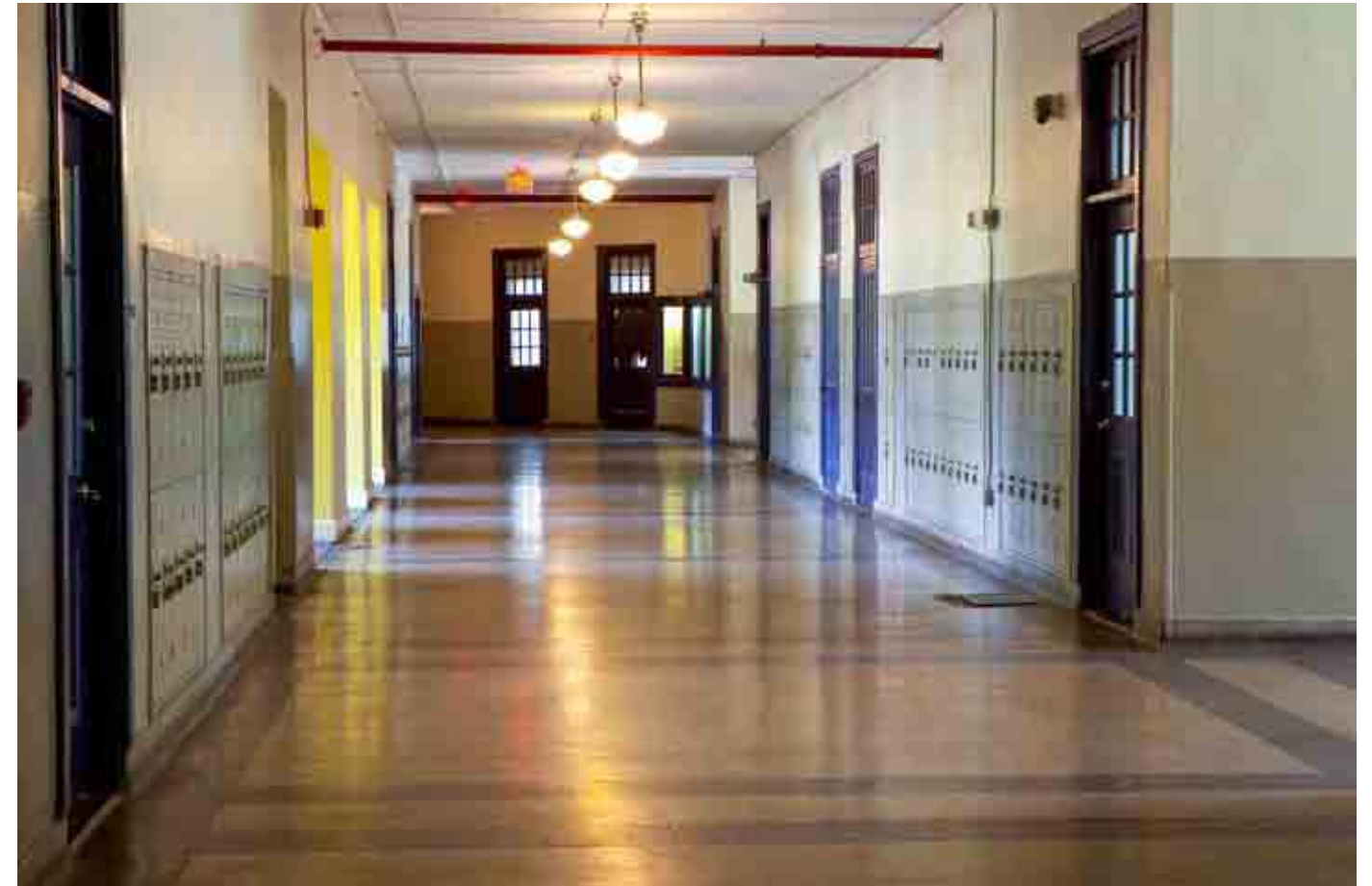
To see the Bryan School Loft’s potential for “pioneering change,” Abdo saw the future trend over five years ago: abandon the suburban areas for the urban core. “I identify with urban smart-growth principles and see a responsible model in them to move city life,” he says. And with old schools as prime examples of this urban trend movement, D.C.’s Bryan School Lofts can claim itself as one of the true school trendsetters and as the ring leader in this “popular crowd.”

Bass Lofts

In Atlanta’s Little Five Points neighborhood, only boys used to roam the halls of Bass School. Once a single sex junior high, it soon evolved into Bass High School, which brought about an

↑ Tenants’ bikes rest against bike racks, alluding to the days when bikes were the most common way to commute to school. Winter Properties, the go-to development firm for adaptive reuse projects, maintained the architectural integrity of the school and gymnasium building, while also adding a third and more contemporary building during construction.





“Since living at Bass, we have made lifelong friends. . . We’re an active group, and accept anyone who wants to join us.”

additional gymnasium building in the 1950s.

It remained abandoned for many years before Winter Properties decided to convert the buildings into loft-style homes in 1996. The developers maintained much of the architectural integrity of the 1923 school, in keeping with its listing on the National Register of Historic Places; the campus-like vibe is heightened by the neighborhood’s funky feel and the sense of community, which residents truly appreciate.

Amie Robb and Dave Kuehling moved to the classroom building at Bass Lofts after living in southwest Atlanta; they were attracted to the eclectic neighborhood and the design of the school. One of the most unexpected reasons they love living at Bass Lofts is the network of friends they’ve established. “Since living at Bass, we have made lifelong friends,” Robb says. “We have cookouts on Sundays, ‘Screen on the Green’ Tuesdays, holiday parties, dinners, etc.”

The couple’s two-story, one-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom loft was originally part of the balcony section in the old auditorium. The old ticket booth still stands outside their front door, and they sometimes project movies onto the lengthy wall of their living/dining room. The unit’s historic elements, like

the charming original windows, pair well with their contemporary furniture and artwork.

The bedroom, which is flanked by a low, curved wall, has a bleacher as well as their niece’s favorite feature in the apartment: in Kuehling’s closet, there’s a small little opening that was once used as a pocket for the projector—if you open it, you can look into the former auditorium, which still has rows of old-fashioned fold-up wooden chairs facing the stage.

“We are an active group, and accept anyone who wants to join us,” Robb says. High school minus the cliques? That’s something worth studying.

EXIT

☐ The Bass Lofts are located in Atlanta’s Little Five Points neighborhood where various companies and a theater still echo the school’s era. Winter Properties made sure to hold onto the ticket booth and the auditorium for character. ☐ The now empty hallways look exactly as they did almost fifty years ago with lockers and bells for passing period bells.



Philadelphia Freedom

A couple uses their loft to frame their artistic lifestyle—and (more importantly) to house their collection of more than 3,000 books.



“We were designing the space as a background . . . not what we normally do. We were designing the frame, and not the painting—which is kind of backwards. We had to take ourselves out of the ‘designer’ role.”

Story by Kyra Shapurji

Photography by Todd Mason

For design firm Qb³, “working backwards” was the most appealing *and* the most challenging aspect to designing a loft with an artist and her husband in a 100-year-old window and door factory in South Philly.





“We were designing the space as a background. We weren’t doing what we normally do,” says Qb³’s Patrycja Doniewski. “We were designing the frame, and not the painting—which is kind of backwards. It was a difficult thing to juggle. We had to take ourselves out of the ‘designer’ role.”

For Qb³, designing a space as ‘a background’ meant designing the loft’s architecture to be a silent, white backdrop for the artwork created by Ditta Hoeber, who along with her husband, Frank, had searched five years for the perfect space to display not just her art but the couple’s proud collection of more

than 3,000 books. “I’ve always wanted my kitchen to have bookcases filled with art and cookbooks,” says Hoeber. Qb³ designed bookshelves that contain the Hoebers’ collection while delineating space.

“We were creating a space for these things,” says Doniewski. “We were hoping to complement their objects.”

But for the Hoebers, their favorite part of the loft turned out

PREVIOUS PAGE:  The kitchen was the trickiest part to conceive for the Hoebers; it was originally situated in the middle of the loft.  The dark, four-leaf dining table is a nice exclamation point to the stark, white space.  Custom-designed cubbyhole shelf, perfectly fit for dishware.  Early morning light streams into the bedroom, appointed with a handmade, cube-shaped nightstand and an antique mirror with Ohji frame.



“They’re very passionate about the way they live. Routines are very precious to them. Some things had to be maintained. That was part of the fun. Negotiate something new with something that’s precious to them.”





“Everything kind of floats off the floor. It’s the darkest element, yet it’s white. We tried to maintain the continuity of the floor and make it a ‘mat’ on which these objects float.”



“I’ve always wanted my kitchen to have bookcases filled with art and cookbooks . . . We didn’t want any materials, and we didn’t want the architecture to come forward.”




to be the old factory windows spaced apart like artworks. The mirroring bays of windows straddle the Delaware River and the Schuylkill River. Working with the light from the windows, Hoeber adds, “We didn’t want any materials, and we didn’t want the architecture to come forward.”

Qb³ worked hard to keep the integrity of the windows and the space’s sense of history. “Everything has this honesty about it, and we didn’t try to mask anything,” says Doniewski. In the 3,200-square-foot space, the design firm found that working with the Hoebers and their individual agendas was at the forefront of the project. “They’re very passionate about the way they live. Routines are very precious to them. Some things had to be maintained. That was part of the fun. Negotiate something new with something that’s precious to them,” says

Doniewski.

The solution to the ‘negotiation’ was a highly conceptualized “mat.” Doniewski explains: “Everything kind of floats off the floor. It’s the darkest element, yet it’s white. We tried to maintain the continuity of the floor and make it a ‘mat’ on which these objects float.” For the one-time partnership of Qb³ and the Hoebers, it turns out that working backwards was the perfect way forward.

EXIT

PREVIOUS PAGES:  Frank and Ditta Hoeber made the decision to keep the loft’s original physical elements to compliment the raw floorboards.  Bookshelves display the couple’s “Philadelphilia,” books on their city’s history, art, and cuisine.  Kitchen cabinets mirror the flatfiles in the background, one of the only two new pieces of furniture since move-in.



Loft in Music

Chicago-based Wilco utilizes every inch of their loft to record, turning the old school studio tradition on its head in the process.



Story by Caroline Henley

Photography by Charles Harris

For the past ten years, behind the brick walls of an industrial building in the Irving Park section of Chicago, the Grammy Award-winning, genre-bending Wilco, and many of their musical guests, have been not-so-quietly making music.

According to Jason Tobias, the band's tour manager, who also handles the Wilco Loft, "Not a lot of people know where it is exactly. The neighborhood allows the Loft to keep a low profile, which is essentially the desired effect. A few diehard fans know and have been pretty cool with keeping it the secret it is intended to be."

Anyone with a DVD player, however, can go inside the Wilco Loft—it served as the backdrop for Sam Jones's 2002 documentary *I Am Trying to Break Your Heart*, filmed during the tumultuous production of the band's near-mythic album, *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*.

That album, famously dropped by the band's label for being "uncommercial," went on to become Wilco's biggest commercial success. So, it's no wonder the band continues to record there. Frontman Jeff Tweedy invites local and like-minded musicians to share the space's ability to produce incredible sound.

Just last year, musician Andrew Bird spent four days recording at the Loft. He spent the entire first day arranging the studio space just to get the right violin sound. Using microphones placed around the room, he was able to pick up the acoustics of his violin as well as the sound of the amps bouncing off the walls. The sixty-plus guitars sitting around the room all hummed along, as the vibrations from everything else shook and resonated the steel strings, adding even more texture to the sound. The Loft is, essentially, an instrument of its own.

Somehow getting the strings of 60 guitars to vibrate together, without ever touching them, might seem fantastical, but the Loft's "brick box" layout allows for such playful effects. "The stairwell, elevator, and bathroom have all been utilized for specific sounds while recording," says Tobias. Grocery-carrying neighbors have been known to take the stairs when Wilco is recording in the elevator. So the building itself actually *shapes*

PREVIOUS PAGE: An organ, several vintage synthesizers, and a grand piano are clustered together to form a keyboard corner. HIGHLIGHTERS used to delineate different tracks are sprinkled across the MCI sound board. GUITARIST Nels Cline jams out in the experimental section that includes the band's extensive collection of CDs, vinyl, and books.





“From old radios, classic amps, posters, vintage recording equipment, hundreds of new and vintage guitars and drums, [the Loft] is basically a candy store for musicians,” notes Tobias.

the recording? Yes and no, answers Tobias. “We *have* built out some things here and there to make it a bit more functional for recording, but most of the uniqueness comes from the gear.”

Forget bric-a-brac; Wilco’s “gear” crowds every inch of the space—pianos, keyboards, sound boards, guitars, amps (new and old) fight for elbow room over a mishmash of traditional Oriental rugs. A row of communal bunk beds lines one end of the room, perfect for creative catnaps or to house guests before and after tours, but no one sleeps there on a regular basis. Although categorized as a live/work space, the Loft is conveniently within walking distance from where Tweedy lives, so the space is mostly work.

While many musicians choose to set up shop in a living room, bedroom, or basement because of a lack of other options, Wilco’s decision to create music in their own self-sufficient live/work space has definitely worked in the band’s favor.

And why not take the reins of their own recording? Tweedy and his bandmates know how much recording studio fees add to the unnecessary pressure to make every minute in a rented studio count. The purchase of the Wilco Loft was not just a stroke of creative genius, but a wise economical move. Turns out Tweedy and his fellow Wilco members are also very shrewd businessmen.

Having access to one’s own studio also changes the entire process of creating an album, notes Tweedy. With an extended period of time for the recording process, each member of the band has that much more time to experiment with the band’s

Handmade bunk beds serve as a place to crash in between recording sessions—or to house guests from out of town. Industrial shelving has been installed to store the band’s travel equipment.

“The space is constantly evolving,” says Tobias. “During the ‘Yankee period’ things felt open and spacious, and now things are a lot more condensed, due to acquisitions . . .”

museum-quality collection of interesting and ultra-rare instruments.

Feel like creating bold imagery out of raw sound, as the band did on *A Ghost Is Born*? Alter the levels with an MCI soundboard. Want to capture a shift of tone with lyrics like “she begs me/not to hit her”? Reach for that rare 1965 Fender Jazzmaster—or experiment by being less “experimental,” as they did with their 2007 release, *Sky Blue Sky*.

“From old radios, classic amps, posters, vintage recording equipment, hundreds of new and vintage guitars and drums, [the Loft] is basically a candy store for musicians,” notes Tobias.

The variety of items used to produce and distort sound is fitting, because, as Tweedy explains, “the nature of my musical interest is to be pretty curious and to shift.” Just like the ever-changing, unintentional design of the Wilco Loft itself.

“The space is constantly evolving,” says Tobias. “During the ‘Yankee period’ things felt open and spacious, and now things are a lot more condensed, due to acquisitions. If something needs to be moved or set up in a specific place, something else needs to be moved in order to accommodate it. It’s a constant challenge to make it spacious, organized, and functional.”

Wilco (the album), the band’s seventh album (released on Nonesuch Records), includes a track called “You And I,” featuring Canadian chanteuse Feist, that was recorded entirely in the space. This time around, the band was able to truly “sculpt the sound” according to Tweedy.

Turns out the seventh member of Wilco is the Irving Park Loft itself.

EXIT

▶ In the mixing room, Jason Tobias (left) manages the various production of the day while Nels Cline, Wilco’s guitarist, tunes his guitar.



Accidental Expat

French designer to the stars, Valerie Pasquiou, invites us into her casual loft, shows us her favorite pieces, and tells the Cinderella tale of finding her passion.





Q & A by Cate West Zahl
Photography by Tom Ackerman

LOFTLIFE: Let's start at the beginning. This cool, sophisticated, and oh-so-cultivated design sense you instinctively have... Where is that coming from and when did you first leave France to bring it to America?

VALERIE PASQUIOU: I came here when I was 22 years old. Actually, I've been in the States for 20 years, and the last four have been in New York. So it's pretty incredible.

LL: But you started out in Los Angeles, is that correct?

VALERIE: Yeah, I started out in L.A. sort of by chance. It's a long story, but basically I lost a bet, the terms of which involved me traveling somewhere I hadn't been before. I ended up in Los Angeles and ended up staying. That's when I started to get into styling for photo shoots, and then I got into set design.

LL: I've always wondered how to become a stylist.

VALERIE: So my background is art and advertising, which led me very naturally into set design. I got noticed by a few people, mostly photographers, who said things like "you have such a good eye," and really encouraged me to start doing set design full time. One thing led to another, and I started to work with people like Ben Stiller, Sheryl Crow. That said, it was an amazing training in terms of interior design because I learned how to be extremely efficient in a short period of time.

LL: Well then how did you end up getting your big break into the business?

VALERIE: If you can believe it, my big break came on my second job. Essentially, for the last year that I was doing set and production design, a friend of mine came up to me and said, "I have

"It's really all about the chemistry you have with your client. It starts with trust, just like a relationship. You are basically deciding to get married to this person for the duration of this project."

a 5,000-square-foot house, and would you consider doing it?" And I said, "Okay, I'll help you." Of course, two months later she left me hanging with a project. And then the completion of this project got me my second job, also my big break, with k. d. lang.

LL: This is starting to sound like a Hollywood fairy-tale that's too good to be true!

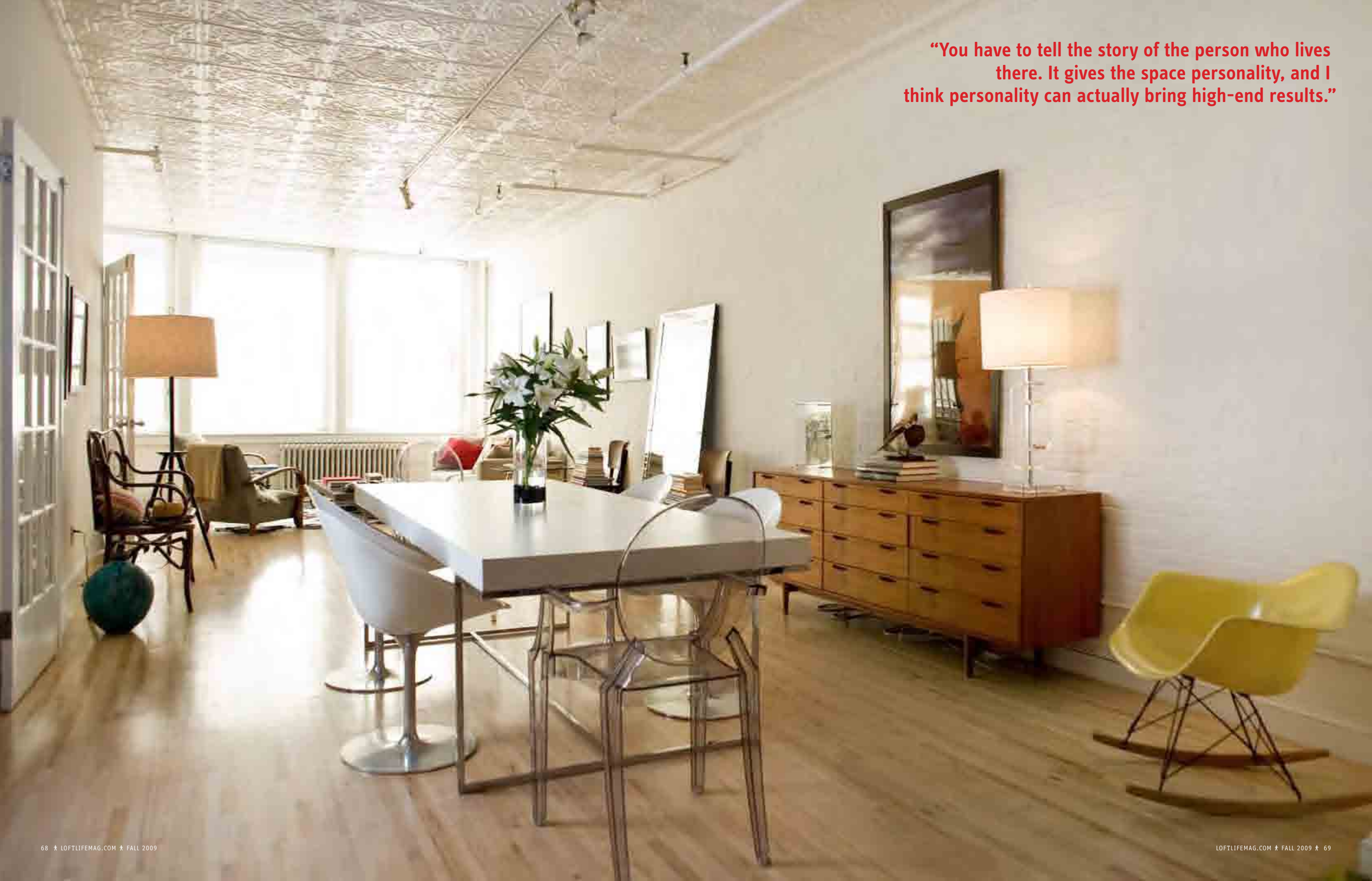
VALERIE: I know. She had only hired me to do a bed and to design a bedroom. And then two days later she said, "You know what? You are doing the house." So it was very natural. I never really pitch any people for my work. It's really all about the chemistry you have with your client. It starts with trust, just like a new relationship. You are basically deciding to get married to this person for duration of this project.

LL: So the relationship really does matter the most?

VALERIE: It really does. I think there's a distinct psychology behind what we do as designers. Especially when you do residential. It requires you to be extremely attentive and you have to be a good listener. And you have to be sensitive to the person's desires. It's a permanent thing, you have to work through the details to make the client happy. The overly polished or artificial look never has character. It can turn into a showroom.

PREVIOUS PAGE: Valerie kicks back in her casually elegant living room that features a cowhide rug and modern furnishings from Italy. "I have to be around books. They are very important to me. My space is full of stacked books." Her favorite piece, a 1960's bentwood bench that is the only piece of furniture "off limits" in her space, is placed between doors.

“You have to tell the story of the person who lives there. It gives the space personality, and I think personality can actually bring high-end results.”





“Let’s face it. The whole minimalist thing is a pretty snobby way to look at design. I mean, come on. No one really can pull that off.”

LL: Speaking of showrooms, here’s a quote you once said: “I’m anti-showroom look. Having a mix of things gives the home more personality. In Europe, you keep your family antiques and mix them up with contemporary pieces. That’s where you can push the edge.” Talk a little bit more about this.

VALERIE: First of all, let’s face it. The whole minimalist thing is a pretty snobby way to look at design. I mean, come on. No one really can pull that off. I think the two most important factors in interior design is staying true to the personality of the client and a willingness to keep pieces they are attached to. You have to be working with their art. You have to tell the story of the person who lives there. It gives the space personality, and I think personality can actually bring high-end results.




LL: It’s refreshing to hear you say that, especially since it does feel like high-end modern décor is usually equated with a sparse, cold aesthetic. So, if every space tells the story of the

person living in it, what’s yours? Why did you choose this loft?

VALERIE: I was born by the beach in France, and we lived in a spacious house, so I guess if I am going to live in a city, then I love the feel of being in a big space. You have lots of light, it gives you room to be free and think. It nourishes the creative spirit. Personally, I like warmth, and I like elegance. I like details. I like comfort. I like timeless. And I like modern, but always with a mix of old and new.

EXIT

For the full interview, visit: loftlifemag.com/valeriepasquiou

PREVIOUS PAGE:  Philippe Stark chairs surround an expandable white table from Modern Italia. An Eames rocker, full length mirror and vintage credenza help fill out the open space.  The most minimal part of the loft, the white bedroom is the definition of tranquility.  A vintage school desk from Europe is placed in this secret nook, perfect for letter writing.





The Design Winds of Chicago

The City by the Lake is a place where art and culture foster a local design scene on the cutting edge.



2



3

The city teemed with the possibility of a life lived with panache, where something in the water motivated people to fight for their principles.

Story by Dave Bourla

Photography by Linden Hass

The media's continual search for what "Real America" actually means has me thinking about Chicago. The city's "great fire" and almost instantaneous reconstruction happened over 125 years ago, but that same sense of hope and renewal still sweeps through the air like a breeze off Lake Michigan.

Like many in my generation, my first glimpses of Chi-town came through the lens of the late John Hughes. The city teemed with the possibilities of a life lived with panache, where something in the water motivated people to fight for their principles. Recognizing this dreamy confidence, it seems natural that these films' audience members played a vital part in throwing off earlier political norms to install a Chicago resident as the United States' first black president. Each year, those who have stuck around take a chance on their beloved Cubs, recognizing

that while incredible advances in science, business, and the arts take place at Northwestern and Chicago universities, the only true ivy league resides within Wrigley Field's brick walls.

This unbridled optimism allows the city to thrive and helps Chicagoans foster a design aesthetic that reflects the opportunities inherent in the modern age. Few pieces encompass this spirit of discovery better than Daley Plaza's now-iconic **2 CHICAGO PICASSO**. Though it no longer sparks the controversy it did at its dedication in 1967 (the piece so confused residents that some asked the city to replace it with a statue of Chicago Cubs' legend Ernie Banks), this unidentifiable beast continues to invite admirers to identify its meaning for themselves.

If you're looking for a personal connection in the city, it can happen at **8 CASTE**. Located at 521 North Halsted Street, northwest along the Chicago River from the Picasso, Caste's clean,

open space houses furniture, art, and home accessories hand-crafted by co-owner Ty Best from exotic woods and carefully shaped metals. Showcasing these pieces helps the boutique ensure that each customer finds a unique creation to demonstrate his or her own individuality.

Chicagoans are naturally young at heart, and one store to stop in for some childhood quality time is at 1953-55 West Chicago Avenue, home to **4 ROTOFUGI DESIGNER TOY STORE & GALLERY**. Owners Kirby and Whitney Kerr's extensive collection took my breath away. Feeling as if I had peeked inside Takashi Murakami's mind and discovered the inner and outer limits of his creativity, Rotofugi seems to have found a number of local Chicago artists to create tiny figurines based upon this artistic pop art style.

A short walk away is one of Chicago's more terrestrially-

focused spots, **7 SPROUT HOME**, at 745 North Damen Avenue. Like their Brooklyn store, not only does Sprout carry an overwhelming supply of plants, they also have individually designed water-delivery systems to appeal to each specific perennial that the heart desires. Sprout offers design and installation services, getting as personal as you want them to. And it's not all potted plants and whimsical watering cans; Sprout also carries a fine furniture collection. Pieces like their "Loft Timber Bench" particularly caught my eye—what fills a person with more hope than thinking they're sitting on the ceiling?

Continuing eastward towards Lake Michigan and beginning in Edgewater, I stepped into **11 ROOM SERVICE** at 5438 North Clark Street. The motto, "Live With What You Love," encourages buyers to trust their instincts in a storefront filled with



According to Gehry, “Chicago, in my humble opinion, is the best American city traditionally and just visually.”

charming current and vintage pieces. Modern multi-colored blown-glass vases somehow mesh with their old world credenzas, a vision best imagined while sitting on one of the mod seating options the store sells.

Just down the road are two spots that truly embody the concept of classic simplicity. Both **13 SCOUT** at 5221 North Clark Street and **5 WHITE ATTIC** at 5225 showcase a healthy dose of urban antiques. Scout offers furnishings that eschew baroque adornments in favor of clean and simple lines. White Attic puts its stark, egg-shaped baubles and eye-popping mirrors next to a modern “lamp bar,” where power is returned to the customer. At the “lamp bar,” customers can design their own lamp from 17 ceramic bases, five shade sizes, and close to 100 fabric shade options—customers can walk away with exactly what they had in mind.

A few storefronts away at 5061 on the same street brings the

wanderer to **9 FOURSIDED**, a framing gallery and appreciators of art. Continuing south and back onto North Halsted Street at 3337, I stumbled upon **6 I.D.** and its incredibly large “modern eyewear” collection combined with a “modern home” side. Owner Steven Burgert looks to a future in home décor that’s “more geometric, more bold, that pushes the edge of Modernism.” Beyond cutting-edge frames from Jean Lafont and Tom Ford and choice furnishings from BluDot, Spectrum, and Bensen, I.D. carries international designers “people can’t generally get in Chicago.” Droog, Iittila, and free-trade Transglass vessels from Guatemala mingle with the work of local designers such as TIVI, who sells a line of cuffs, rings, and purses made from ebony and metal.

Perhaps a little less on the cater-to-you kick is George Lowell Arduser’s storefront **12 GEORGE LOWELL** at 5123 North Clark Street. Arduser does want to meet your needs, but it’s probably

better if your tastes match his. His work displays a very definite sense of design, which provides a slightly modern addendum to antiquated austerity.

This differs greatly from the waterside whimsy of 613 North State Street’s **10 P.O.S.H.** A short walk from **15 MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**’s glass-windowed façade, P.O.S.H. provides an ode to the American flea market. This shop tailors to those who like an international spin to their vintage tableware, with French water pitchers from Vin Francoeur and Belgian transferware cake stands that have employees gushing about the possibilities found in combining ceramic rounds and metal bases.

Wandering down along the water to circle back and enjoy the public offerings in Millennium Park, I reached the plazas that comprise this mall and found the recently-opened **14 MODERN WING AT THE ART INSTITUTE**. Renzo Piano’s I-beam

shaped structure underwhelmed me, while some of Piano’s other works, such as the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland, are quite profound.

Finally, Anish Kapoor’s **3 CLOUD GATE** stands alone, offering a wide variety of reflections, including an expansive, singular view from the outside and infinite varieties from underneath. Like Frank Gehry’s floral **1 PRITZKER PAVILION**, “The Bean” offers the chance to consider individual interpretations in a public space, to see unique properties and tastes as part of an overarching continuum of possibility and discovery. According to Gehry, “Chicago, in my humble opinion, is the best American city traditionally and just visually.” The Pavilion, like the city itself, deserves as many looks as Aeolus, the keeper of the winds, allows.

EXIT



Joshua Labove's photo, shot from 6th Avenue, of an alley in Belltown, Seattle (2006).

The Belltown Curve

LoftLife creative director **Tom Ackerman** tumbles down the rabbit hole of memory to relive his first days as a Seattleite.

Seattle is very hilly, except for the former Denny Hill, which was transformed by the city in the early 20th Century. Now a 10-by-15-block regrade in the middle of the city known as Belltown, the neighborhood is a collage of stately pre-war apartment buildings, industrial spaces (both abandoned and functioning), dive bars, artist studios, and a few high-rise condos.

I rolled into Belltown in 1985, a recent college grad from Bozeman, MT, driving an overloaded mid-70s VW Bus with brakes and a clutch so physically challenged that this man-made flatland was destined to be my new home. I found a beautiful 1BR for \$275 a month, made some friends, and got a job at Seattle's lone major company, Boeing. (Microsoft had barely launched; Starbucks had only one store *in the world*).

Trouble was, my new downtown was too easy, too cheap, too much fun. Two Bells Tavern offered a burger and a pint for \$4. A mean dyke at the Frontier Room served \$1.50 cocktails to drag queens, artists, and real-life drunken sailors. There was a thrift store *in my building* for costumes and supplies, and the local bands that would become "the grunge scene" played \$5 shows. Seemed like nobody had a day job but me. So I decided it was time to let Boeing go.

I found work washing dishes, and went to *everything*. Day and night parties, shows. My friend Paris became an art star, Paula threw Nino Rota parties where we all pretended to be characters from Fellini films. Dan wrapped himself in Christmas lights and chased a bus until his extension cord ended, I laid on a train car filled with cedar chips at an Einstürzende

Neubauten show.

In our giant loft, my roommate and I would throw lavish dress-up cabarets to make the rent; in the winter, we'd rebuild our motorcycles inside.

The Pike Place Market was my grocery store. The produce guys would give me a peach ripe for Tuesday, another one ripe for Wednesday; the fishmongers taught me that halibut cheeks (and who knew they had them?) tasted just like scallops; the dairy always had sweet cream butter fresh from the farm. I hung out with witches who sold tie-dye and silver, and taught me the Tarot. Once, I bought a violin from a bum.

Everything happened in Belltown. I just dropped in, rolled down its hills, and landed in what would become my glory days.



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