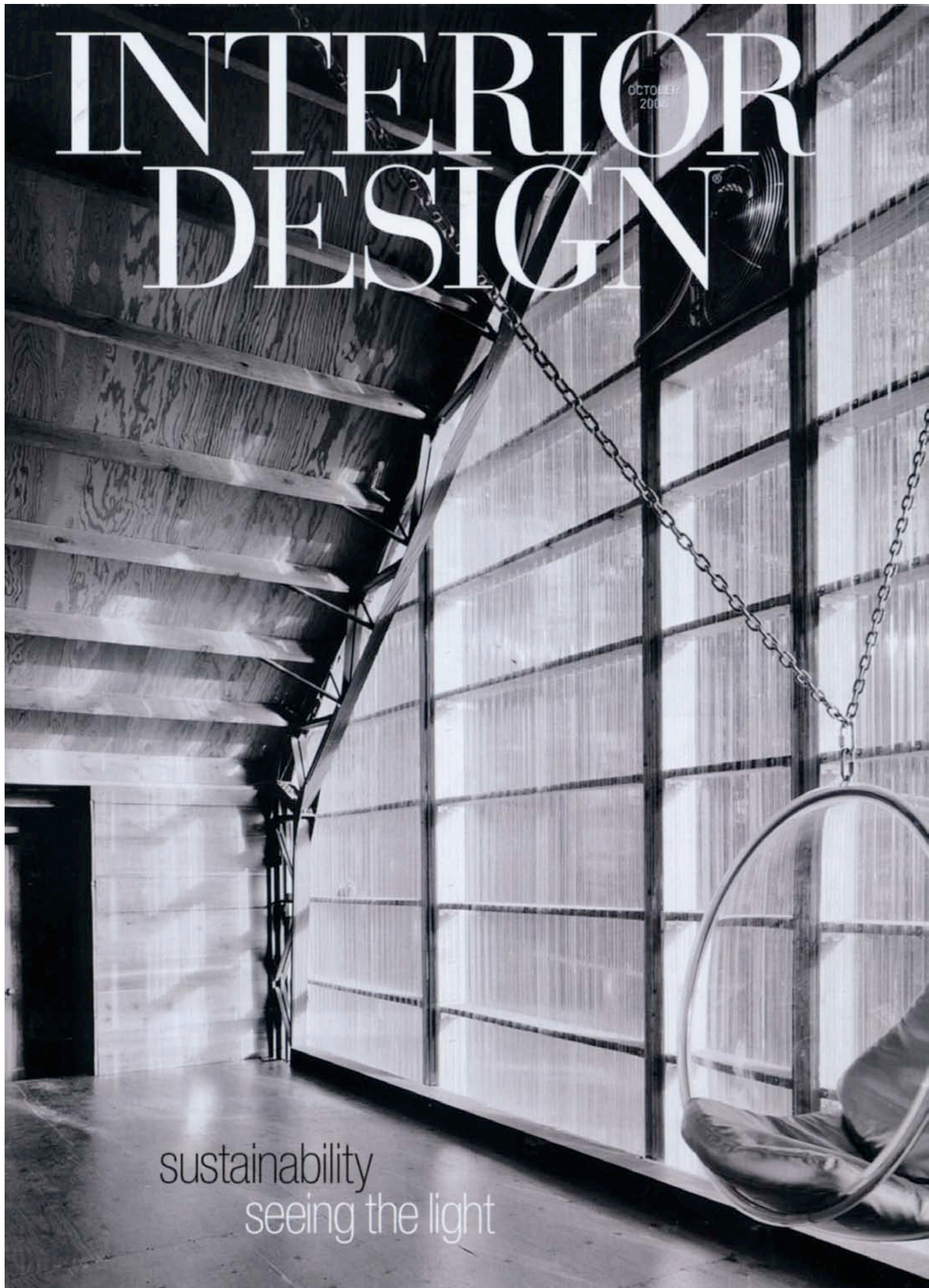


# INTERIOR DESIGN

OCTOBER  
2006

sustainability  
seeing the light







*text: joe carter  
photography: john ellis*





## the house at the end of the road

Retired from the music world, a couple in Burlington, Vermont, kick back at their sustainable sanctuary by Dufner Heighes

**After more than 15 years as** managers of a rock band—much of that time on the road—Cynthia Brown and her husband, John Paluska, stepped on the brakes. Time to stay put, start a family, and confine much of their worldview to transforming a postmodern house in Burlington, Vermont, into a craftsman-style home. In need of a designer to finish and furnish the 6,400 square feet of bare studs, roughed-in windows,

and raw subfloors, Brown was lucky enough to drop by New York's International Contemporary Furniture Fair and meet furniture designer Tyler Hays, founder of BDDW.

Liking the tables and beds that Hays makes from thick wooden slabs, she asked if he could come work on her Vermont house. Instead, he recommended Dufner Heighes, an architecture firm that often specifies his furniture.

Two weeks later, Brown was showing principals Greg Dufner and Daniel Heighes Wismer a selection of house photos loaded on her PowerBook. By meeting's end, she was a client.

The project embraced multiple types of wood. Windows framed in Spanish cedar gave Dufner Heighes the cue to cover several ceilings with the same material. In the kitchen, cabinets and open shelving are handsome yet →

*Opposite: Edward Wormley designed the sofa in the library.*

*Above: A hallway features Vermont bluestone on the floor and Spanish cedar on the ceiling as well as stools by Ilmari Tapiovaara, a soccer ball by Takashi Murakami, and a light box by Lars-Erik Fisk.*





**Top:** Mira Nakashima designed the foyer's black-walnut slab bench.  
**Bottom:** From the living room, a 65-foot-long sight line extends uninterrupted to the front door.

low-key vertical-grain Douglas fir. Down on the floor, 6-inch squares of hard-as-nails end-grain larch were made from reclaimed "sinkers," logs that rolled off barges and into an Idaho lake. *Ipé* lines the stair tower and an adjoining powder room. The master bathroom's cabinets and Japanese-style soaking tub are all teak.

Per the couple's directive, every plank and flitch came from sustainable, Forest Stewardship Council-certified suppliers. "It was a decision to be conscientious," Brown says. "We took the opportunity to vote with our dollars."

This was the first time that Dufner Heighes had specified eco-friendly products and materials, but the task proved surprisingly easy. "We knew what we wanted to do. We just had to find the materials to do it with," Dufner says. "Green is getting to the point where, if you do the

research, you'll turn up what you're looking for."

So strong was the couple's commitment to sustainability that the designers even had to find natural fabric for the motorized solar shades that drop from the pocket above each window—normally, they're vinyl. The house's natural-fiber curtains and rugs, often colored with vegetable dyes, were never chemically treated. Where possible, paint and clear coatings are water-based low-VOC formulas.

All the walls got a boost from full-spectrum paints, which derive their color from up to 20 pigments instead of the usual two or three. "Rooms on the first floor are mostly light sage, which can turn taupe at certain points of the day," Brown says. "It's not always consciously perceptible, but it has a calming effect, and it contributes to the organic feel of the house." Before painting, Dufner Heighes applied a





*Top left:* End-grain flooring in the library is made of reclaimed larch "sinker," logs that had spent the past century at the bottom of a lake in Idaho. *Top right:* Stools with cane seats pull up to the Calacatta marble counter of the kitchen's Douglas fir island. *Bottom:* In the living room, a Finn Juhl armchair and a Jean-Michel Frank sofa gather around a walnut-slab table by Tyler Hays. The oil on canvas is by Antonio Murado.







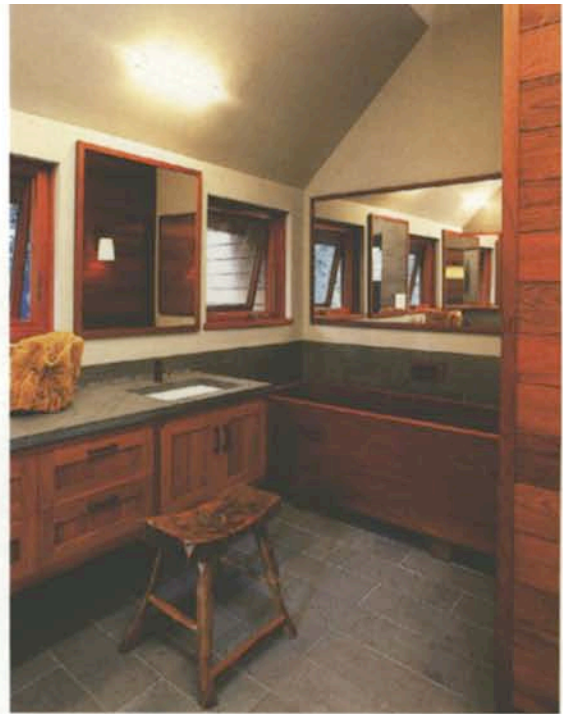


plaster skim coat to the bland gypsum-board to impart subtle texture and depth.

The designers went so far as to order faucets in uncoated brass, then give them a bronze patina. The duo even stripped the chrome from the towel bars to reveal the brass beneath. That might seem like a lot of extra effort to spend on mere details, but Dufner and Wismer were intent on bringing every element in line with a tactile, earthy aesthetic. Just ask Brown and Paluska—it's all about the vibe. 🍷

WALLPAPER (LIBRARY): **ROBERT CROWDER & CO.**, PILLOWS: **JUDY ROSS TEXTILES**, SOFA FABRIC: **CLARENCE HOUSE**, SOFA (LIBRARY), PENDANT FIXTURE (DINING AREA): **THROUGH KERSON 20TH CENTURY**, SOCCER BALL (HALL): **THROUGH RETROMODERN.COM**, PAINT (HALL, FOYER, LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN, DINING AREA): **DONALD KAUFMAN COLOR COLLECTION**, STOOLS (HALL), ARMCHAIR (LIVING ROOM): **THROUGH R 20TH CENTURY**, FLOORING (HALL), FLOORING, WALL TILE, COUNTER MATERIAL

(BATHROOM): **THROUGH VERMONT STRUCTURAL SLATE COMPANY**, BENCH (FOYER): **GEORGE NAKASHIMA WOODWORKER**, CUSTOM DOOR: **STARK MOUNTAIN WOODWORKING**, PLANTER: **GALERIE VAN DER STRAETEN THROUGH MAISON GERARD**, RUG (FOYER), OVAL, SLAB TABLES (LIVING ROOM), BED (BEDROOM), TABLE, BENCH, STOOL (DINING AREA): **BDDW**, LOUNGE CHAIRS (LIVING ROOM): **DUNBAR FURNITURE**, CUSTOM RUG: **TIBET CARPET**, CURTAIN FABRIC: **LAURA LIENHARD TEXTILES**, FLOORING (LIVING ROOM, LIBRARY, KITCHEN): **THROUGH TIMELESS TIMBER**, CUSTOM LOUNGE CHAIR FABRIC (LIVING ROOM), BEDSPREAD FABRIC, CUSTOM RUG (BEDROOM): **AM COLLECTIONS**, SQUARE TABLE (LIBRARY): **THROUGH LIN/WEINBERG GALLERY**, STOOLS (KITCHEN): **MODERNLINK**, REFRIGERATOR: **LIEBHERR**, SOFA (LIVING ROOM): **RALPH PUCCI INTERNATIONAL**, MAHARAM (FABRIC), OTTOMAN, TRAY: **THROUGH JOHN DERIAN**, RECTANGULAR TABLE: **ROMAN THOMAS**, TUB (BATHROOM): **WILLIAM GARVEY**, CUSTOM TUB, SINK FITTINGS: **VOLA**, DRAWER PULLS: **ROCKY MOUNTAIN HARDWARE**, PAINT (BATHROOM, BEDROOM): **ELLEN KENNON**, BENCH (BEDROOM): **THROUGH DONZELLA**, LAMP: **THROUGH RETROMODERN**, CURTAIN FABRIC: **HENRY CALVIN FABRICS**, CUSTOM WINDOWS, DOORS: **TRADEWOOD WINDOWS & DOORS**, MILLWORK: **HILDEBRAND CABINETS OF VERMONT** (LIBRARY, KITCHEN), **MARK BOUDETTE** (BATHROOM), ARCHITECT OF RECORD: **BIRDSEYE DESIGN**, GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **MERKUR CONSTRUCTION**.



*Top: In the master bath, sustainably harvested teak was used for the soaking tub and vanity. Bottom: A Wormley brass bench sits at the foot of Hays's black-walnut bed in the master bedroom.*

*Opposite: In the dining area, a 1940's brass pendant fixture by Paavo Tynell hangs above chairs by Hans Wegner and a table and bench that Hays made from a single slab of 2,000-year-old Douglas fir.*

