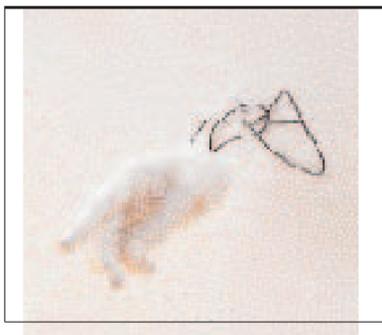


Warming Up Minimalism



High
Architecture
in the
Museum
District

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A modern stucco shell with a low-slung, standing-seam metal roof rests quietly on the traditional neighborhood street. A spiral stair sits back from the front facade to appear as if it's cut out of the house and floats between the two vertical zipper windows. Home designed by Carrie Glassman Shoemake and Ernesto Maldonado of Glassman Shoemake Maldonado Architects.

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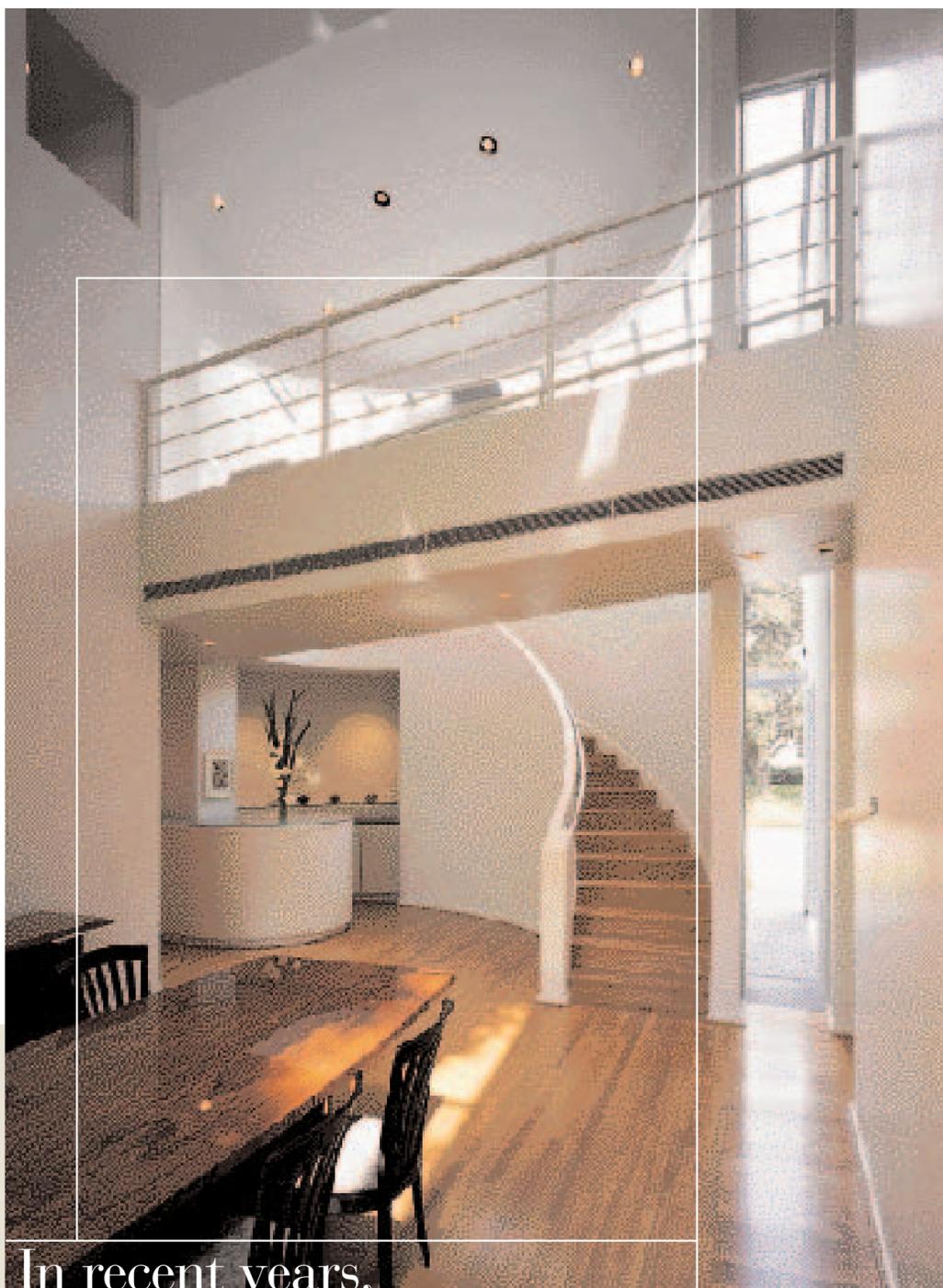
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The bridge ramp, right, angles across the house to add a human-scale element to the dining room. Sloping and angling the bridge gives more movement and kinetic energy as the soft northern light shines along the stair, reflecting a ribbon of light off the top of the handrail. Lacquered dining-room table and chairs from Roche Bobois.

you're looking for the latest thing in home interiors, let us forewarn you. Minimalism is more than just a passing trend, a moment-defining movement or an isolated style. After all, how else can we explain a phenomenon that has reinvented, reapplied and reinterpreted itself across generations, disciplines and cultures to the extent that its influences are found in everything from the 16th-century Japanese ideals to Mies' 1929 Barcelona Pavilion to Calvin Klein's 1990s minimal monopoly of the runways.

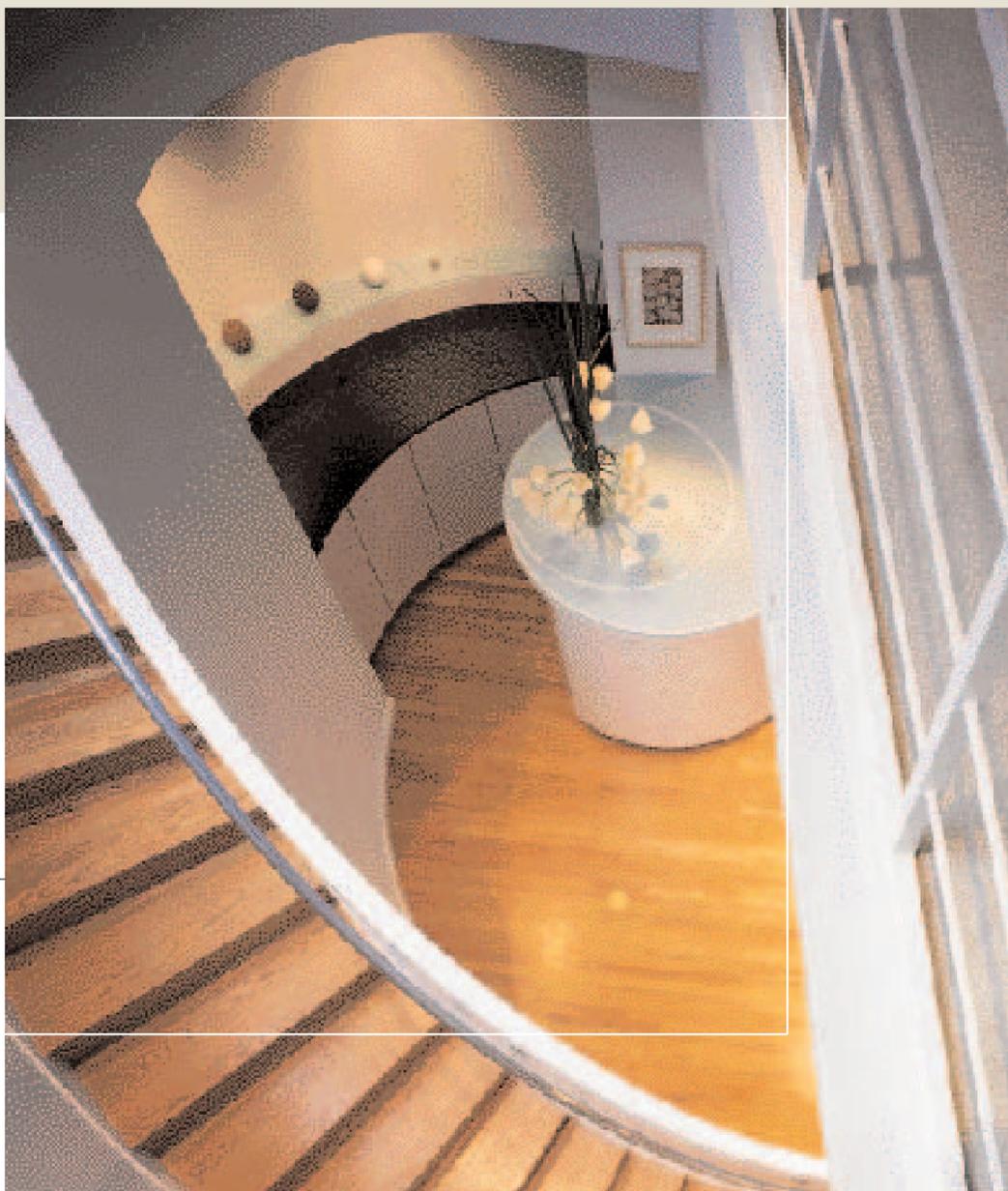
In the annals of architecture, minimal has long been a mantra. In recent years, it was minimalism *à la* industrial chic. For the millennium, the clean aesthetic still prevails, but this time as a byproduct of functionality. The idea here is to create a utilitarian existence that conforms to an individual's lifestyle — a concept that has become familiar territory for architects Carrie Glassman Shoemake and Ernesto Maldonado of Glassman Shoemake Maldonado Architects. They recently completed a project in the Museum District for Pam and Carl Johnson in which the focus was designing a home that conformed to the individual functions and lifestyle of the Johnson family.

"When we looked at the lot, it turned out to be a perfect golden rectangle," remembers Shoemake. The site's proportions proved to be a serendipitous coincidence for creating the environment that the Johnsons were looking for. Their previous home had been a Nolan Willis design, which was described as having "a lot of angles." Although that had been their first experience living in what could be called high architecture, it had given them some definite ideas about what they wanted. "I wanted to make sure from the very beginning that curves were going to be a part of the plan," Pam says. Besides creating an organic feel, it was important to both the owners and the architects that the house retain a balanced energy. Keeping these two ideas in mind, Shoemake and Maldonado embarked on a project that became an in-depth exploration of form and space. They were able to address both of their clients' desires almost immediately by using the lot's golden mean to create a large nautical spiral as



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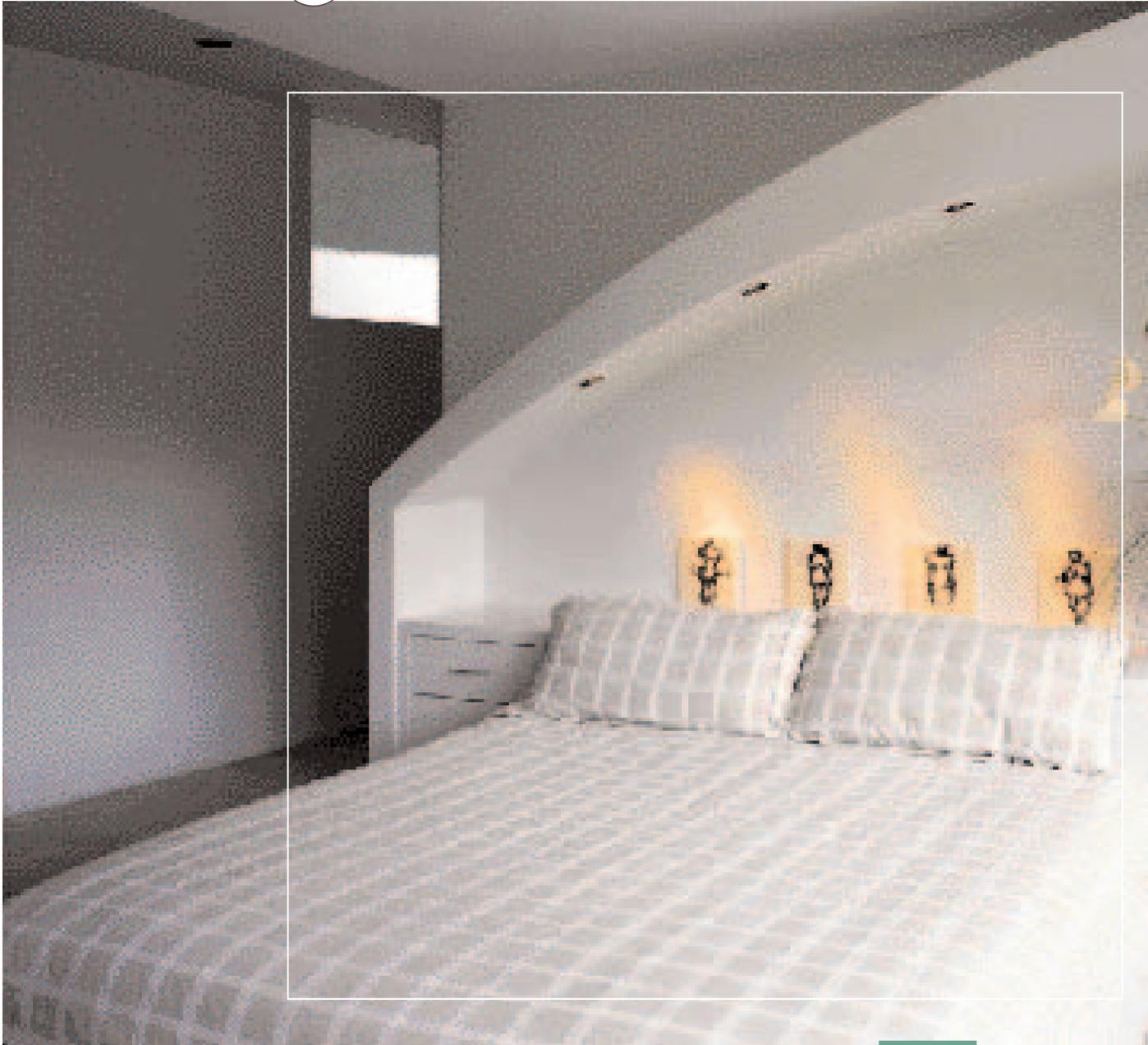


the basis for the plan of the house. The spiral established a guideline for creating the curves while creating spaces of perfectly balanced proportion.

One of the early struggles in the design was a paradox: how to insert a contemporary house into a fairly traditional neighborhood. While Pam feels strongly about continuing to "move forward, to look at what our contemporaries are designing and to learn to live in it," she also maintains that "there's still something appealing to me about order." Shoemake and Maldonado responded to her concerns with a traditional box that was kept fairly low and set back to maintain its privacy from the street. However, there was still the issue of how to incorporate the modern quality that the Johnsons were looking for.

Their stroke of genius became the grandest gesture of the house and is referred to as "the drum." The drum is placed in the middle of the box at the center point of the plan's spiral, veritably splitting open the otherwise unassuming solid form. "Once the drum became part of the plan," Maldonado comments, "it created all the interesting spaces we needed to work with to give the interiors a contemporary feel." It also separated the

The center of the nautilus spire, left, is the heart of the house. Sandblasted glass and granite countertops in the bar area, stainless handrail, white oak spiral stairs, egg tempera on paper by Kathleen Packlick, collection of graduated spheres.



Bringing in more curves, an arch over the bed adds a feeling of protection and comfort. Ink on waxed paper drawings by Sarah Hutt.

different functions of the home and divided it into three main parts: the wing that houses the living room and the upstairs bedrooms; the middle section, which includes the curving staircase (the spine of the nautilus), the bar (the center of the nautilus) and the dining room; and the left wing, which houses the kitchen, guest rooms and upstairs master bedrooms. The drum maintains a kinetic energy on the inside. Interstitial spaces created on either side, with a two-foot-wide zipper window on one and a one-foot-wide zipper window on the other, make the monolith look as if it's always in motion.

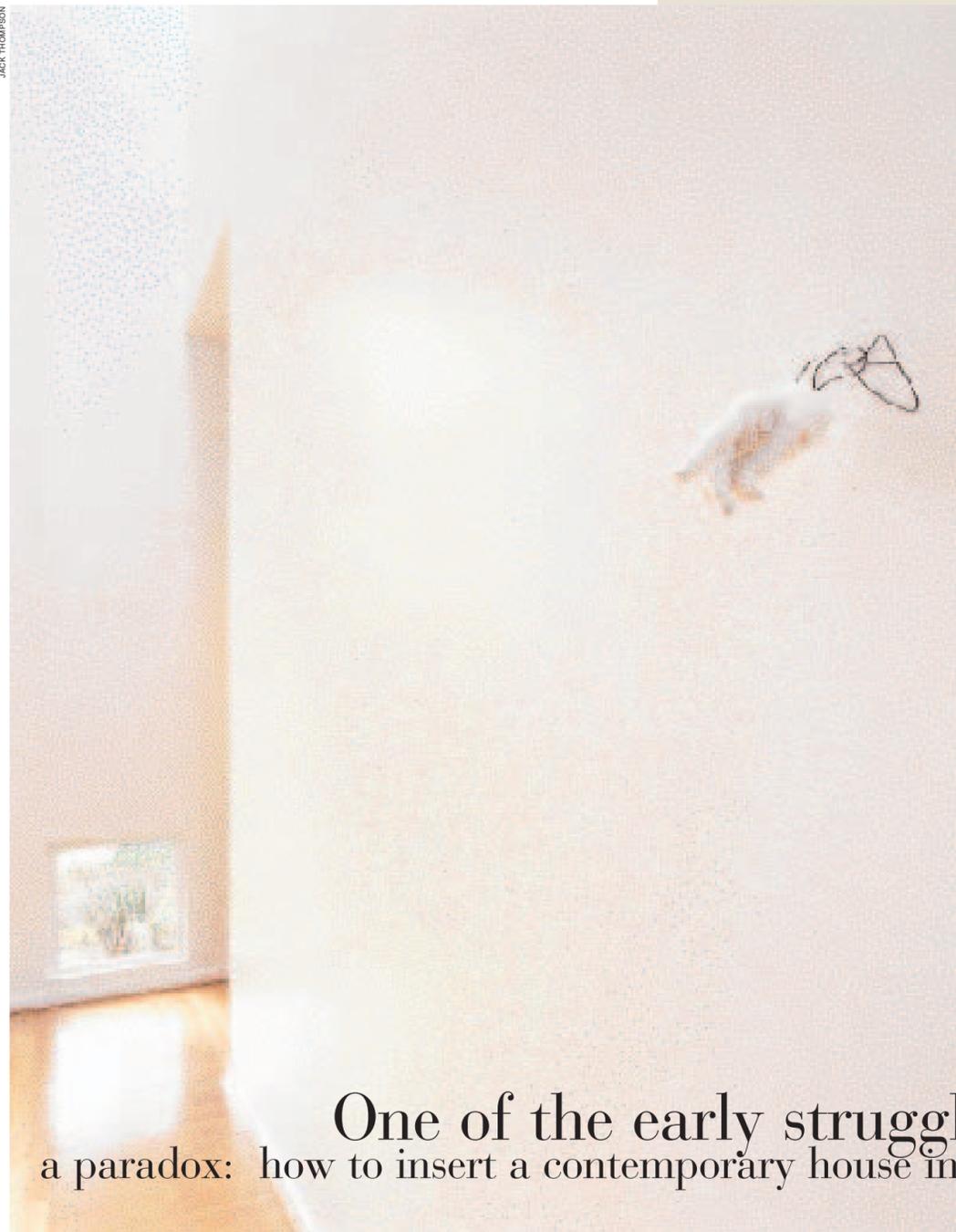
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addition to grand conceptual gestures, Shoemake and Maldonado were meticulously conscientious toward the smaller details that were essential to the concept of the design. For example, every room benefits from natural light from at least two directions; colors subtly demarcate major functions of the house (tan for the wings, blue for the drum, pumpkin for the utilities and ochre for the garage and studio); and the angled bridge connects the upper wings and adds to the kinetic energy of the design.

The interior maintains a minimal, elegant, contemporary feel. More than accommodating a certain look, however, the clean aesthetic is a response to the Johnsons' desire for an appropriate, functional living environment. "We tried to accomplish that by working with shapes, light quality, proportion and materials. Woods were used to give a warmer feeling." To keep the rooms from looking too stark, Shoemake and Maldonado used four different shades of white on the walls. Another major consideration was sizing and constructing the interior walls, keeping in mind that the owners wanted to designate certain surfaces as "art walls." Two-by-six studs were used horizontally on these walls, in anticipation of hanging and displaying the art. The interior lighting was also determined to adequately showcase the art: "we used six different types of light and needed over 120 fixtures," says Pam.

In the end, the Johnson house was able to embody all the qualities to which both clients and architects were striving. Thanks to a combination of color, light and materials, the house emanates a warm and elegant atmosphere, not to mention a perfectly balanced energy. The clean, contemporary aesthetic also merges seamlessly into the traditional neighborhood setting. And in one more instance, minimal — albeit warmed up — becomes one of our favorite things.

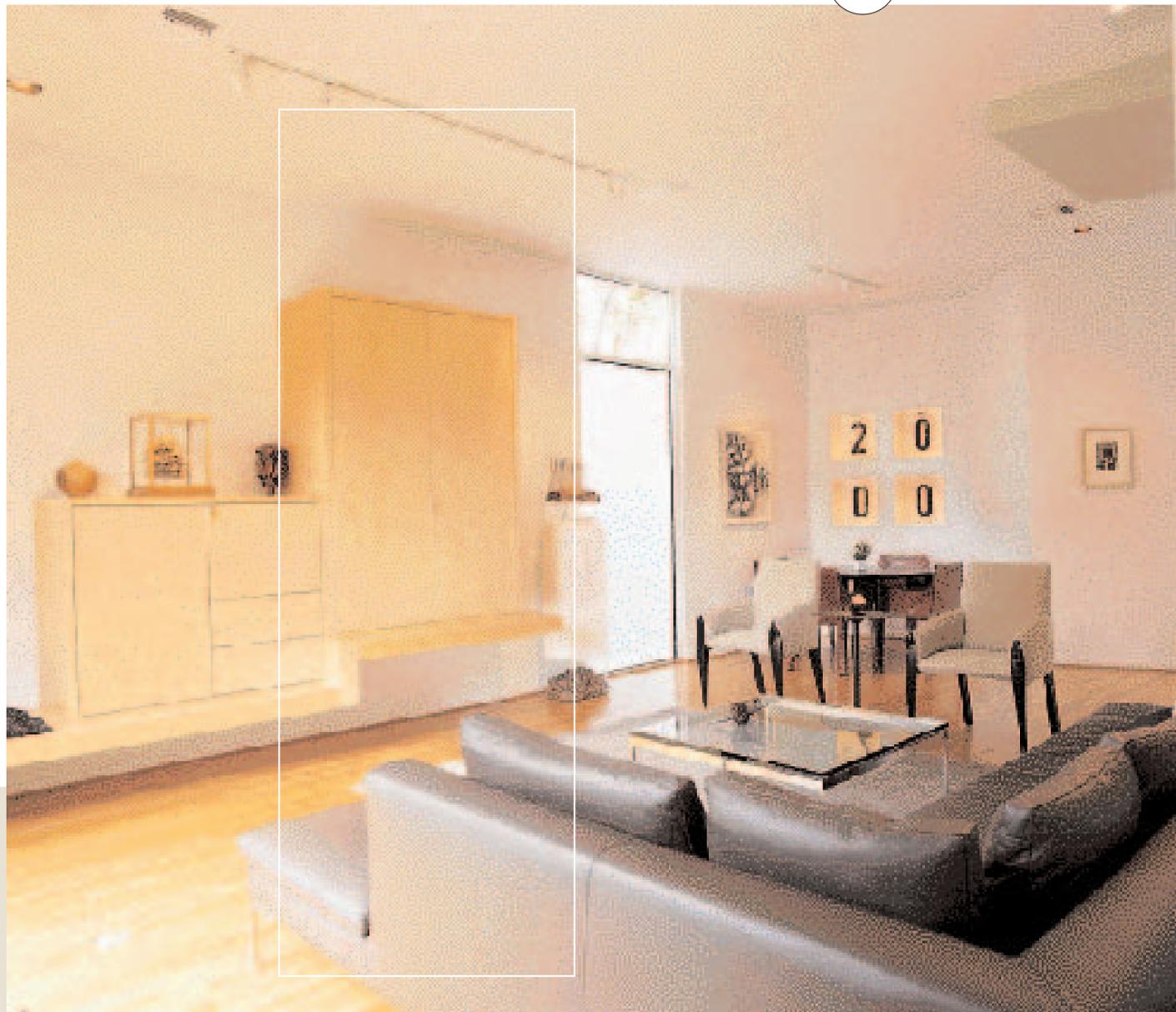
The small window serves as an exclamation point for the two-foot-wide zipper window, the two-foot-wide skylight and the two-foot-wide walkway created by the change of the direction of the wood floor. Ceramic hand by Yoshiko Kanai



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To accentuate the full width of the room, the custom entertainment cabinet floats, allowing the floor to extend to the wall. A plinth was created on which the cabinets sit like boxes for a more sculptural feel; art niches in dining alcove were created to rotate art and create different scenes. Art, left to right: box by Kathy Conn, large collaborative piece by Pam Johnson and Kathy Conn, mixed media on paper by Pam Johnson, 2000 installation piece by Pam Johnson, gouache on paper by Mary Jernigan. Mario Bellini Cab chairs for Cassina around Kiyo custom game table. B&B Italia brown leather sectional couch, Dakota Jackson Ke-zu chairs, Pierre Chareau eventail sidetable by Ecart, barbed-wire sculpture by Steve Murphy on Nicos Zographos stainless-steel, glass-topped coffee table. Chevrons and Côtes rug by Ecart.



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In the kitchen, full-height gridded cabinetry in maple, creating monolithic forms is a signature of the architectural firm; stainless-steel back-splash, custom hood and appliances; granite countertops. In background, banana sculpture by Carter Ernst.

