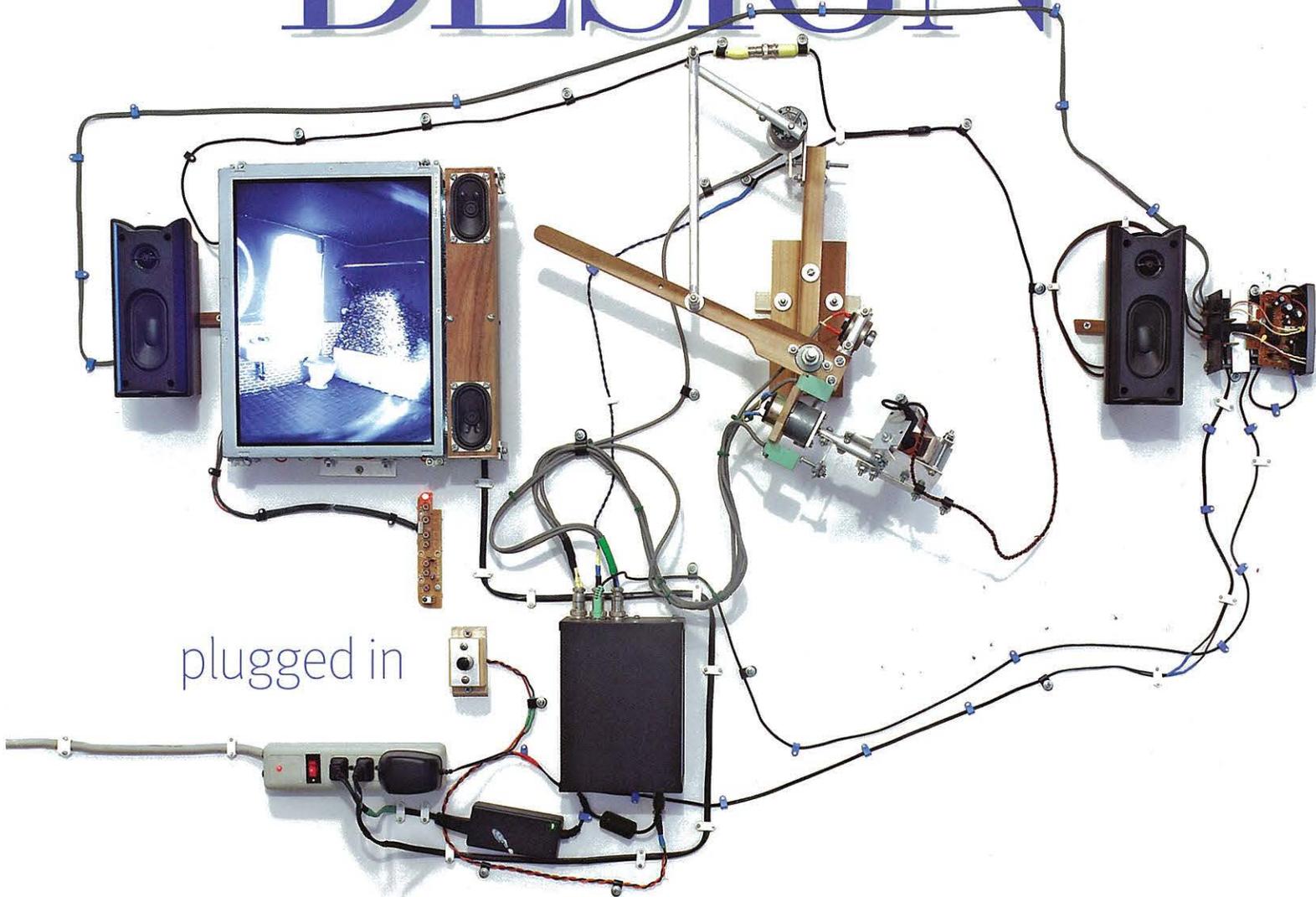


INTERIOR DESIGN

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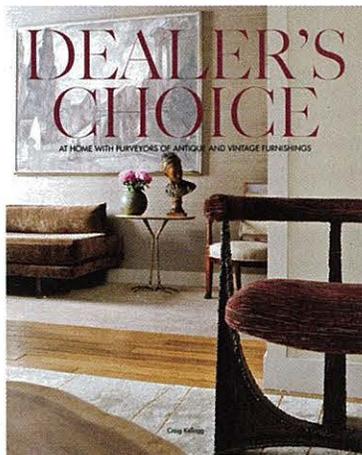


plugged in



right at home

In *Dealer's Choice*, tastemakers live with the next big thing



This Cinderella story starts at a Salvation Army thrift shop where two odd 1950's armchairs sat lonely and ignored. They were not at all comfortable, with seats practically scraping the floor. The lacquered frames were worn, and the faux leather upholstery was grimy.

But when a furniture-dealer friend of mine stumbled across the pair, he saw potential, dragged them home, and cleaned them up a bit. Then his roof leaked, and they got soaked. As if that weren't bad enough, the repair crew proceeded to splatter them with cement. So my friend, never one to give up, embarked on a full restoration that culminated with a master upholsterer re-covering the cushions in a tweedy green velvet that seemed vintage. At last, the chairs looked salable, and a European gallerist ultimately wrote a small check for them.

A couple of years later, I found myself at a raucous cocktail party in the fabulous New York apartment of a big-name interior designer. At the center of the travertine floor sat those very same chairs, right down to the quirky green velvet. They looked absolutely splendid in the fading

summer sunlight. When I suggested a connection to "a local dealer friend of mine," however, the host quickly countered: "I acquired those in Europe." Indeed. And they must have cost a small fortune.

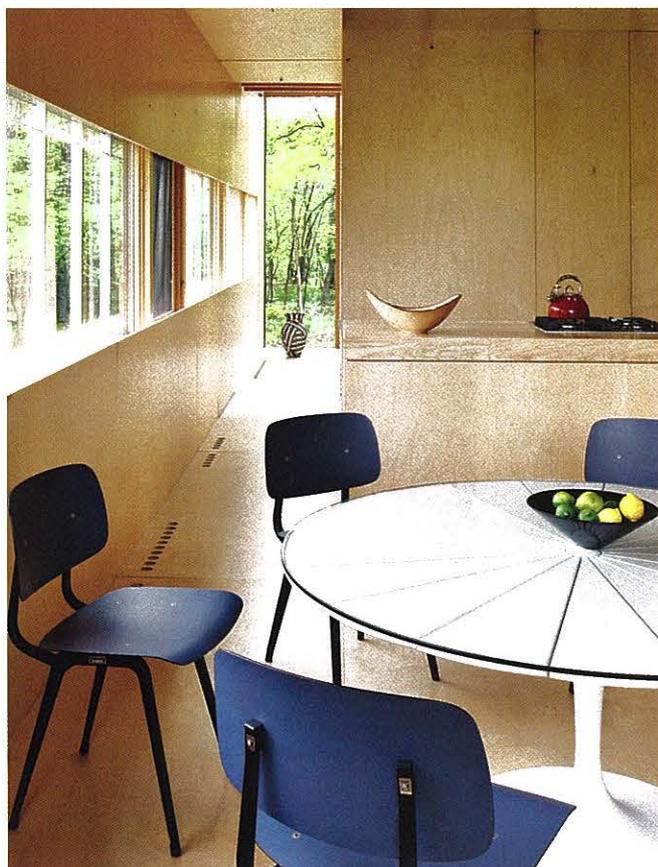
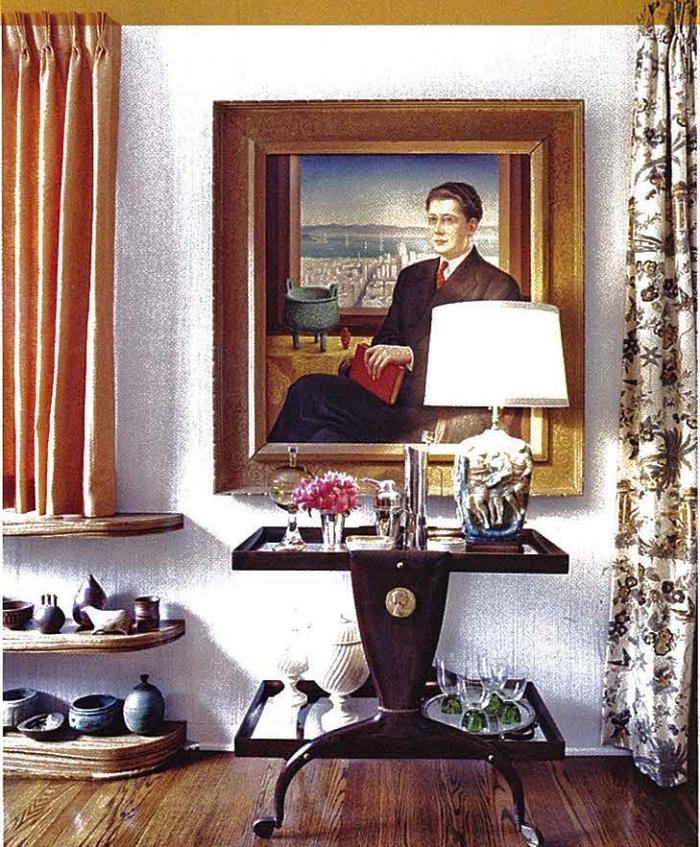
Why does one table or sofa go into the Dumpster, while another ends up in the penthouse of a billionaire playboy? Luck, of course, plays a role, along with the felicitous turn of a leg. Probe deeper, and you're likely to find a vintage-furniture dealer.

Dealers matter for the crucial reason that they have the power to shape taste. It's when they venture too far out in front of the ball that the avant-garde merchandise, unable to tempt even the most adventurous customer, ends up in their own living rooms. Those rooms therefore offer a window into the future of taste—a revelation that ultimately inspired me to write *Dealer's Choice: At Home With Purveyors of Antique and Vintage Furnishings*, now out from Architecture/Interiors Press.

Larry Weinberg, owner of New York's Weinberg Modern and a frequent contributor to *Interior Design*, ended up parking a 1940's bent-plywood wheelchair with army-surplus webbing in the living room of the apartment he shared with 2Michaels principal Joan Michaels. "I thought she would reject it," ➤

From top: The cover of Craig Kellogg's new book, out from Architecture/Interiors Press. A Tommi Parzinger sideboard under Maison Charles sconces and an Andy Warhol silk screen in Todd Merrill's New York living room.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: A bent-plywood wheelchair, pre-Columbian figure, and Sam Samore photograph in the New York living room of Larry Weinberg and Joan Michaels. Gio Ponti's bar cart and Marcello Fantoni's table lamp accompanying an oil portrait by Stanislaus Paray in Downtown partners David Serrano and Robert Willson's Los Angeles living room. Chairs by Friso Kramer encircling a table by Richard Schultz in Cristina Grajales's dining area in Salt Point, New York. A Venetian 19th-century bed in the New York bedroom of Kimcherava's Ruth Kimche.





he says, still sounding genuinely surprised. Instead, she topped it with a sheepskin rug.

"You always have to feel what's coming next," Ruth Kimche of New York's Kimcherova Gallery concurs. Her statement makes perfect sense from someone who has forecast trends for department stores and helped orchestrate the U.S. launch

of what was then an upstart fashion watch, Swatch. She earned her avant-garde interiors reputation by dealing in Wiener Werkstätte furniture as well as mid-century decorative arts, the more flamboyant the better. Take her double-height loft's pair of French tribal-surrealist chairs in wrought iron and leather with crystals.

Because the homes

of dealers reflect the range of their interests, the interiors can be wildly, wonderfully eclectic. David Serrano and Robert Willson of the Los Angeles shop Downtown are not the types who would hesitate to take great-grandma's stalwart lumbering buffet and lacquer it a bracing shade of apple green. The master bedroom of the couple's 1938 house mixes no fewer than two dozen patterns when you consider wallpaper, bedding, and curtains—an experiment one might anticipate from Kelly Wearstler. And it turns out that she's not only a customer but also a friend.

On the relatively serene end of the spectrum, the Paris apartment of Mady Jourdan reflects an evolution over the course of four decades. She'd bought her Louis XVI commode even before opening her first antiques shop, specializing in the 18th century. After moving to New York in 1983 and opening Jourdan Antiques, she began to sell French 1940's pieces by ➤



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From top: Jean Royère armchairs facing a Marco Zanuso sofa in the Paris living-dining room of Mady Jourdan. A Charlotte Perriand table and Jean Prouvé chairs in the New York dining room of the Magen H. gallery's Hugues and April Magen.

FROM TOP: STEPHAN JULLIARD/TRIPPOD AGENCY; JEAN-FRANÇOIS JAUSSAUD/LUXPRODUCTIONS

Jean Royère and Maison Jansen. She also became interested in Vladimir Kagan, Paul Evans, and other mid-century Americans. When she returned to Paris, she brought some of their designs back with her.

Many studio pieces by Evans as well as Pedro Friedeberg have been sold by New York's Todd Merrill Antiques

20th Century. "The crazier I get, the more people look to me for guidance," Todd Merrill marvels. Born into a family of auctioneers, he abandoned traditional "brown furniture" when he realized that the future rested with designers such as James Mont, who counted movie stars and mobsters among his flamboyant friends, circa 1950.

Merrill's apartment, the parlor floor of a town house, juxtaposes Mont and Tommi Parzinger cabinets with zebra-skin rugs.

Other dealers' homes relate to their shops even more directly. The Cristina Grajales Gallery, in a New York loft, has white walls and oak-strip floors, and that museumlike minimalism goes even further in the ultracontemporary weekend house that Thomas Phifer and Partners designed for Cristina Grajales in Salt Point, New York. Aside from a low mustard-yellow sofa, a sculptural cocktail table in polished aluminum, a white Richard Schultz pedestal table, and some Dutch 1950's schoolhouse-style chairs—which she has also sold—there is practically no furniture. Grajales cultivates this studied simplicity as a break from her city life, surrounded by stuff. The point of the dealer game is to never get too attached.

—Craig Kellogg



From top: Kimche's living area, which centers on an Italian table, circa 1940, and Vienna Secession chairs. The London living room of the David Gill Galleries's David Gill, with a Richard Prince photograph over the mantel, an Emilio Terry armchair, and various pieces by Elizabeth Garouste and Mattia Bonetti.

