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## September/October 2019

**VOLUME 3/NUMBER 5**  
The magazine of the  
American Society of  
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the Interior Designers  
of Canada

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## STAYING IN THE MOMENT

Mindfulness—the learned act of being present in the moment—may be the answer to a more creative, more productive you.

**BY ROBERT NIEMINEN**



Image: Courtesy of Lemay. © Adrien Williams

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## IN SUPPORT OF WELLNESS

Today's designers and manufacturers of materials and products are raising the bar on healthy spaces. It's a mutually beneficial collaboration that will only grow with time.

**BY MICHELE KEITH**



Image: iankkogal

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## A MOVING TARGET

Measurable design standards—whether they are about green, sustainable buildings or environments that promote health and wellbeing—have become an industry norm. This in-depth look explores the current state of LEED, WELL, and Fitwel.

**BY DIANA MOSHER**



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### THE POWER OF DESIGNING FOR ALL

As a large segment of society seeks to age in place, the concept of universal design has expanded. Now, relatively simple design solutions can—and should—benefit the long-term comfort, safety, and independence of *everyone*.

BY STEPHANIE TIMM, PH.D.,  
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Image: Danilo Agutoli

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### ICONIC PROFILE: SUSAN CHANG & JOEY SHIMODA

The founders and partners of Los Angeles-based Shimoda Design Group bring loads of talent—and a great sense of humor—to their everyday professional and personal lives. The firm has steadily gained a reputation for innovative workplace interiors, history-conscious building renovations, and bold, forward-looking creative campuses.

BY AMBROSE CLANCY



Image: One&Only Residences at La Mandarina

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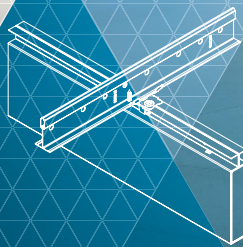
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# THE STATE OF WELLBEING




Randy Fiser,  
CEO, ASID, and  
Tony Benders,  
CEO, IDC  
(Image: Lindsay  
Cephas)

Wellbeing may be viewed as a state of mind, but the mind is a powerful and curious thing. Influenced by all its experiences, everything from the color of a wall, to a burst of natural sunlight, to a pattern it innately recognizes can move the mind to a state of peace and balance. In other words, every decision a design professional makes has the potential to positively affect the lives of those who will experience it.

In this issue of *i+D*, we examine the idea of wellbeing as it relates to the design industry on many levels. We deliver a primer on the design standards that are addressing everything from sustainable materials to healthy inhabitants (“A Moving Target,” p. 38); and we investigate varied approaches to wellbeing in product design—from the use of local, natural materials and dyes to patterns that calm the brain by mimicking visual themes found in nature (“In Support of Wellness,” p. 44). We also take a moment for you, the practitioner, and look into how your business and your life might benefit from being more mindful (“Staying in the Moment,” p. 22). Finally, for the first time, we turn directly to research professionals to provide documented evidence as to the very human benefits of universal design and creating environments where homeowners can live well and age gracefully (“The Power of Designing for All,” p. 54).

Wellbeing happens on many levels. From how we care for ourselves on a daily basis, to the varied products we purchase and use, to the spaces in which we live and work, all play crucial roles in our general happiness and overall wellbeing. The design of interiors and the products that complete them are uniquely positioned to be drivers on the road to wellness and to lead a stressed population to a more balanced life. ●

  
Randy W. Fiser  
ASID CEO

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The exterior of Turett's Passive House, which resembles other contemporary structures, features a shiplap gray cedar and concrete façade and an aluminum roof. (Image: Liz Glasgow)

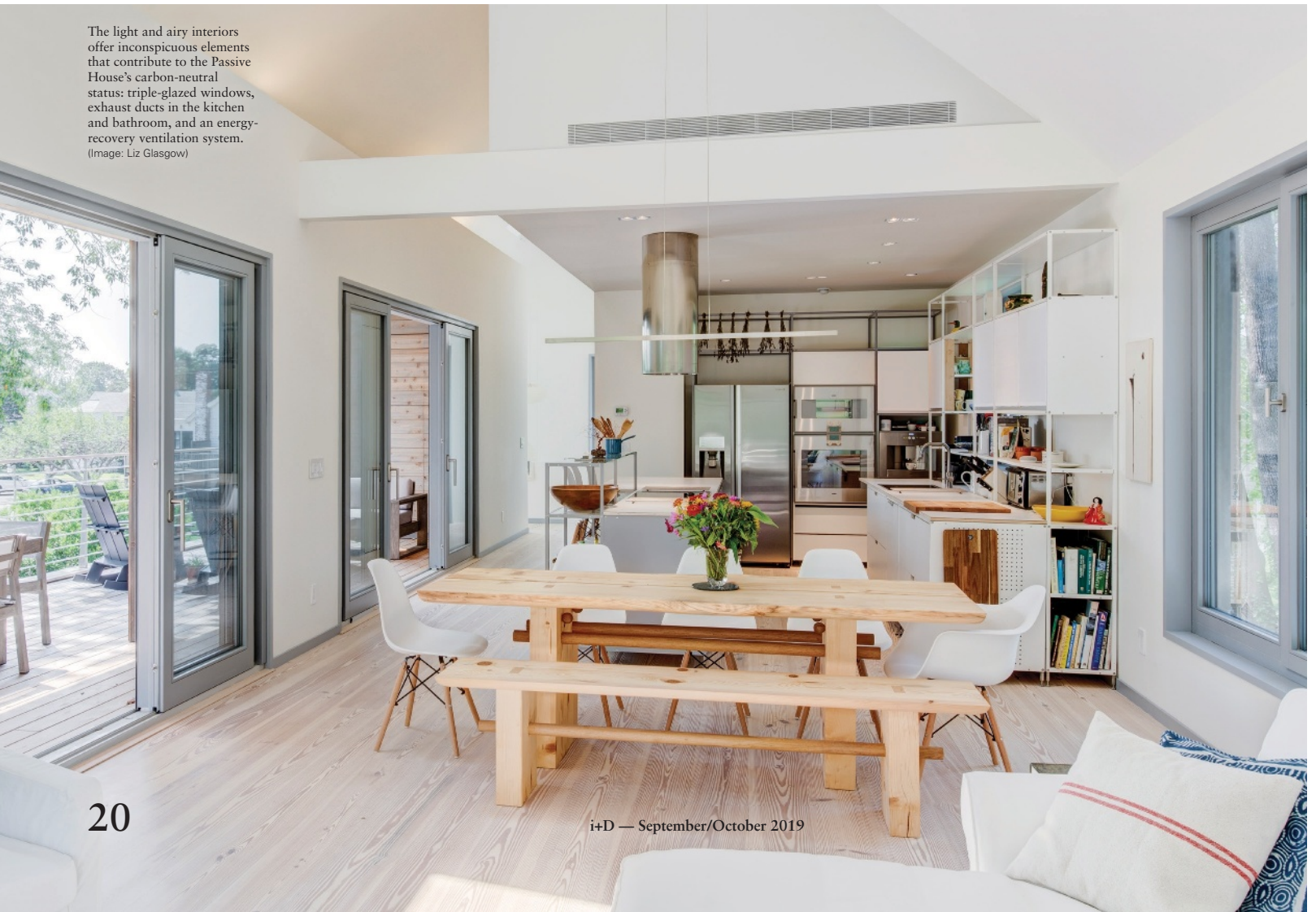


# PASSIVE HOUSE PLANNING

**WITH A PASSION FOR CLEAN LIVING AND CARBON-NEUTRAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, ARCHITECT AND PRINCIPAL WAYNE TURETT, OF THE TURETT COLLABORATIVE IN NEW YORK CITY, HAS LONG HELD AN INTEREST IN PASSIVE HOUSES.**

For more than three years, Turett researched, sketched, and planned what would become both his dream family weekender home and a living model for designers and clients seeking energy efficiency in their homes. Fusing his modern aesthetic with an historical barn exterior, Turett's own Passive House doesn't look different from the other contemporary homes in the village of Greenport, New York, which is located on the North Fork of eastern Long Island; the difference is in the way it performs as a result of its carbon-neutral design.

The light and airy interiors offer inconspicuous elements that contribute to the Passive House's carbon-neutral status: triple-glazed windows, exhaust ducts in the kitchen and bathroom, and an energy-recovery ventilation system. (Image: Liz Glasgow)





Further energy-efficiency considerations in Turett's Passive House include the use of strategically placed roof overhangs. (Image: Liz Glasgow)



The increasing popularity of green building and sustainable design in recent decades has given new life to the Passive House movement in the United States, but the idea first became active in Germany in 1988 when the term “Passivhaus” was coined. “I was always leaning towards energy efficiency and sustainability in the work I do,” explains Turett. With the help of the Passive House Institute (PHI), the independent research organization largely responsible for the development of the Passive House concept, and architects like Turett, the movement is growing.

The term “Passive House” refers to a rigorous standard for energy efficiency in a building, which certifies its ability to maintain optimal thermal comfort year-round with minimal energy required for heating or air-conditioning. Three key elements must be observed when designing a Passive House: First, the building's envelope has to be completely sealed so there is no air leakage; second, the insulation must ensure heat cannot escape and cold air cannot enter; and, last, each building will require added elements, such as roof overhangs, that shade the building from excess summer sunlight. Turett's home also incorporates triple-glazed windows, exhaust ducts in the bathroom and kitchen, an aluminum roof, and energy-recovery ventilation (ERV) that brings in and removes air in the home.

The PHI's Passive House building certification does come with challenges, as it does cost more to build and can be difficult to find a general contractor with working knowledge of the requirements. Turett served as his own general contractor and, with the help of craftsmen on Long Island, was able to achieve an all-electric home operating on very little energy for heating and cooling; it's more than 90-percent energy efficient.

“The results of living in a Passive Home will more than pay for itself in energy savings and helping the environment,” Turett explains in a statement about the project. He periodically invites clients and other architects and designers over to tour his home. “It's an eye-opener for a lot of people, it doesn't look peculiar,” Turett observes. He plans to incorporate the certification's building components in future single-family and larger projects.

For more on meeting Passive House criteria, visit [www.passivehouse.com](http://www.passivehouse.com), and expect more on the movement in future issues of *i+D*. ●

—Cara Mitchell



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# STAYING IN THE MOMENT

BY ROBERT NIEMINEN

MINDFULNESS MAY BE THE REMEDY  
TO OUR DIGITALLY OVERLOADED LIVES.

How many times each day do you pick up your smartphone? Would you be surprised to discover that the typical cell phone user touches their device more than 2,600 times per day? That's the figure cited by a 2016 *Business Insider* report, which indicates just how deeply attached we are to our phones.

"So, *what?*" you may be thinking.



(Image: lankogal)



## Showroom Special Advertising Section



It may seem inconsequential, but research suggests there's a link between the amount of time we spend interacting with technology and our health and productivity. For example, a study published in *Computers in Human Behavior* reveals the use of multiple social media platforms is strongly associated with depression and anxiety among young adults. Similarly, a *Forbes* article notes that heavy technology use has been linked with addictive behaviors, increased stress, and sleep disorders. Further, a piece in *Harvard Business Review* argues that "digital overload may be the defining problem of today's workplace." Citing a report from Information Overload Research Group, the article indicates knowledge workers in the United States waste 25 percent of their time managing growing data streams at a cost to the economy of \$997 billion annually.

Technology isn't all bad, of course—and, ironically, it's being used to help alleviate the very stress it can cause. Guided meditation apps like Calm, Headspace, and Insight Timer have emerged to help people utilize mindfulness to reduce stress, focus more, and even improve sleep.

"The ability to be present with ourselves and others has been significantly eroded by the advent of the always-on world. We know from neuroscience that our brains need to be trained to counteract this distracted state and enable greater presence," explains Louise Chester, founder and managing director of Mindfulness at Work Ltd. "Mindfulness practices can help significantly—as can the conscious decision to practice 'being here now' in all our activities through the day."

What exactly is mindfulness, however, and how can designers and other creative types harness its potential, not only to improve their health, but also creativity? We're glad you asked.

*"Being more mindful is a lifetime journey... The busier you are, the more you need this practice! And, the benefits accrue quickly."*

—LOUISE CHESTER,  
MINDFULNESS AT WORK LTD.

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## Business of Design Mindfulness

### What Is Mindfulness?

There is a myriad of different explanations as to what mindfulness really is, some of which are more helpful than others. The working, scientific definition of mindfulness, according to *Psychology Today*, is “the self-regulation of attention with an attitude of curiosity, openness, and acceptance.” While such clinical terminology may lack appeal, it does ensure consensus among researchers who study its benefits, as well as help clear up misconceptions among consumers, the publication notes.

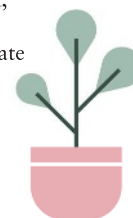
“Mindfulness has to do with paying attention to our present-moment experience with awareness and without any kind of emotional reactivity of what’s happening,” notes Amishi Jha, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Miami and the director of contemplative neuroscience for the university’s UMindfulness Initiative, in a TED Talk. “It’s about keeping that button right on ‘play’ to experience the moment-to-moment unfolding of our lives.”

Ann-Marie McKelvey, founder and director of the Mindfulness Coaching School, implies that mindfulness is about releasing the mental narratives we play out about our experiences and shifting our attention to the immediate sensory experience around us. “We just drop every single story that’s going through our minds about what we’re looking at, what we’re smelling, and what we’re hearing. There’s clarity when that happens,” she says. “Our intuition is awakened, and our awareness is awakened.”

To better understand the concept, it may be helpful to look at it conversely. If a designer is working on a high-profile project with a tight schedule, for example, the tendency is to worry about the details and how—or if—it will get done on time. “Then, the fear takes over,” McKelvey states. “And, it totally eclipses the idea behind the creative project. Suddenly, it’s not about getting the project to an amazing place. It’s about the deadline.”

The process isn’t necessarily about moving at a slower pace, McKelvey points out. Rather, a person with a busy schedule can experience clarity and stability. However, it’s a process that must be learned. “With mindfulness, it’s mind training. It’s not something that is innate with human beings,” she explains.

Jha agrees, and notes that “mindfulness is not just a concept. It’s more like practice. You have to embody this mindful mode of being to have any benefits.”



(Image: ianlogall)

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## Business of Design Mindfulness

### Reaping the Benefits

For those who practice it, mindfulness offers a host of advantages that are backed by evidence-based research. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), studies on mindfulness have identified a wide range of benefits associated with its practice, including, but not limited to:

#### Stress reduction

A meta-analysis of 39 studies of mindfulness-based practices concludes that “mindfulness-based therapy may be useful in altering affective and cognitive processes that underlie multiple clinical issues,” the APA notes. In one study in particular, participants who experienced mindfulness-based stress reduction had significantly less anxiety, depression, and somatic distress compared to a control group.

#### Focus

Researchers comparing groups with and without meditation experiences conclude that participants had significantly better performance on all measures of attention. Mindfulness practices also were correlated directly with cognitive flexibility and attentional functioning.

#### Increased cognitive flexibility

One study concludes that people who practice mindfulness appear to develop the skill of self-observation, “which neurologically disengages the automatic pathways that were created by learning and enables present-moment input to be integrated in a new way (Daniel J. Siegel, 2007),” according to the APA.

#### Reduced emotional reactivity

In another study, people who practiced mindfulness meditation were able to more effectively disengage from emotionally upsetting pictures than those who did not. It also helped participants focus better on a cognitive task, when compared with people who saw the pictures but did not meditate.



(Image: ian.kogal)

Additionally, empirical evidence from the APA suggests that mindfulness can improve relationship satisfaction; reduce rumination; enhance self-insight, morality, intuition, and fear modulation; boost immune function; lessen psychological distress; and increase information processing speed.

Beyond the documented, positive health outcomes of mindfulness, it also can help people become more productive by being more focused and attentive. “Measured outcomes from our corporate solutions programs show an uplift in productivity and creativity,” Chester observes. “Having a more relaxed, focused, and clear mind helps us to prioritize the right things and approach challenges with a beginner’s mind—enabling a wider range of innovative solutions.” Further, she notes that teams who adopt more mindful approaches foster psychologically safe cultures that enable greater inclusion of diverse ideas.

McKelvey adds that, in addition to the measurable benefits, other intangible advantages to mindfulness exist as well. “There’s more energy, there’s a hopefulness that arises, and there’s gratitude,” she says.

But, as with anything worth having, it takes effort. “Mindfulness exercises are very much like physical exercise: If you don’t do it, you don’t benefit. But, if you do engage in mindfulness practice, the more you do, the more you benefit,” Jha states.



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### **Mindfulness in Practice**

There's no one right way to practice mindfulness. In fact, Chester recommends individual preference is important. "Being more mindful is a lifetime journey. But, a good place to start is by stabilizing the mind with some focus training—perhaps choosing the breath as the anchor for our attention, celebrating the moment of mindfulness when we notice we have become distracted, then relaxing, releasing the distraction, and returning to focus on the sensation of the breath," she explains.

To those who say they are too busy or don't have time to meditate or practice mindfulness, Chester offers the following observation: "The busier you are, the more you need this practice! And, the benefits accrue quickly. So many participants in our programs say their 10-minute daily practice gives them multiples of that time back in their day and elevates the quality of the work they do."

McKelvey agrees, adding that just a few minutes of silent meditation each day can have a positive impact. "There are some students at the school that I'll recommend for just five minutes in the morning and five minutes at night to just sit in silence and watch your thoughts." Even 30 seconds of spontaneous laughter can change a person's point of view, she says. "It's such a gift to ourselves because it shifts our perspective. It gets the stagnant chi [moving], and the energy inside our body starts to shift—and it's aerobic."

Designers and others who are new to mindfulness and meditation don't have to go it alone, either. Chester is a strong advocate for group meditation because "practicing together gives a multitude of benefits, from creating a culture of inclusion and strong social cohesion, to engendering greater joy and creativity in those who come together to practice." ●

*"With mindfulness, it's mind training. It's not something that is innate with human beings."*

—ANN-MARIE MCKELVEY,  
MINDFULNESS COACHING SCHOOL

**ROBERT NIEMINEN**  
*is a freelance writer and regular contributor to  
retrofit and Retail Environments magazine, as well  
as the editor-at-large of interiors+sources.*



## **Making Mindful Strides**

Let's face it: There is a great deal of hype surrounding mindfulness. Some proponents suggest it's a panacea to virtually any and every ill, while skeptics denounce it as nothing more than quackery.

In fact, a recent study published in the peer-reviewed "Perspectives on Psychological Science" through SAGE Publishing noted that "misinformation and poor methodology associated with past studies of mindfulness may lead public consumers to be harmed, misled, and disappointed." As such, credible sources of information and evidence-based practices are more important than ever—and strides are being made to set the record straight.

For instance, the healthcare industry is taking note of the growing body of scientific research exploring the benefits of mindfulness and moving toward its adoption to complement clinical care. Case in point: The University of Massachusetts Medical School recently announced the opening of its Center for Mindfulness, a new division dedicated to the academic study of mindfulness. In a letter to the university's constituents, Eric W. Dickson, president and CEO of UMass Memorial Health Care, stated, "We know unequivocally that mindfulness can not only reduce pain and suffering, but can also be used as an adjunct to standard medical care for a multitude of diseases and as a preventive measure to reduce the incidence of stress-related illness."

Likewise, the Foundation for a Mindful Society has introduced its Mindful Cities Initiative, a new project that aims to promote both personal wellness and public health through education about mindfulness. Starting with pilot projects in Flint, Michigan, and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the Mindful Cities Initiative is working to bring mindfulness-based programs into communities by connecting city leaders with resources, materials, and partners to educate citizens with credible information about the advantages of mindfulness.

These developments, among others, demonstrate the legitimate therapeutic potential of mindfulness practices. And, as the body of research grows, greater adoption of mindfulness is likely to follow.





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# WORKPLACE WELLBEING

The recent 2019 *Capital One Workplace Environment Survey* found employees today overwhelmingly expect employers to keep their staff's wellbeing in mind when planning overall office environments. An impressive 87 percent of those surveyed agreed it is important that employers create spaces and programs to support mental health and wellbeing. The age groups that considered this most important were millennials (44 percent) and boomers (41 percent), who noted this aspect of office design was "very important."

Among the key ways survey respondents confirmed their employers could achieve this is through flexibility in both office design and scheduling. More than two in three (67 percent) of employees said a flexible schedule is a resource that would improve their satisfaction at work and overall wellbeing. For those days when they are in the office, more than half (53 percent) cited access to natural light as a mental health resource that would improve their overall satisfaction; 89 percent agreed they are able to work better when they have spaces in the workplace to take a break; and 42 percent noted they would specifically like to have quiet spaces available in the office where they can unplug.

The survey results show mental health and wellbeing as a key concern for employees in today's 24/7, wired world. Employers can make strides toward a happy and healthy staff by keeping these important aspects of life in mind when planning spaces and programs for their employees. ●

## How can employers support mental health and wellbeing in the workplace?

67%

Flexible schedule, such as the ability to work remotely or non-traditional hours

30%

Active workspaces (i.e., standing or treadmill desks)

53%

Access to natural light

28%

Outdoor workspaces

43%

On-site healthy food and beverage options

25%

Communal dining areas for lunches, coffee, or snacks

42%

Quiet spaces for relaxation, rest, or to "unplug"

19%

Spaces for creativity (i.e., studio space with tools for creating prototypes, artwork, or crafts)

34%

On-site health center and wellness programs

Source: 2019 Capital One Workplace Environment Survey



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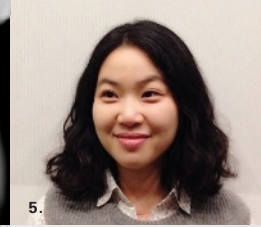
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# Contributors

As the A&D community embraces health and wellbeing in the design process, so too are the authors in this issue of *i+D*, who have covered the topic in prolific ways in each of their articles. They always provide enlightening insights from their research, as follows.

### 1. Michele Keith, *In Support of Wellness*

Many varied interior products and service suppliers are becoming major players in the pursuit of healthy spaces, as outlined in Michele’s article on products for wellbeing (p. 44). “My interviewees expressed such passion for helping to improve people’s lives. Beautiful, tactile products, yes, but also ones that ‘do good,’” she reveals. “Being a visual person, I had never thought that there might be clients who would need *scientific proof* that certain colors, patterns, materials, etc., actually affect people in so many ways, mentally, physically, spiritually.” The most tangible proof of industry emphases on the topic, according to Michele, is that “wellbeing’s connection to design is increasingly discussed and written about. It might take a while for some consumers to get on board, but they’re assuredly on their way!”

### 2. Ambrose Clancy, *ICONic Profile: Susan Chang & Joey Shimoda*

Besides the knowledge he has gained from writing about interior designers, particularly his accounts in “ICONic Profile,” including this edition’s installment on Joey Shimoda and Susan Chang (p. 52), Ambrose broadened his understanding of, and interest in, designing for wellbeing from a more personal involvement. “Modern hospitals, especially, have contributed to the wellbeing of people going through some of the most stressful chapters of their lives, with designers using natural light and open spaces, putting a lot of thought into making waiting rooms comfortable. I’ve seen this because my sister-in-law has had a siege—all’s well now—and the hospitals were, for the most part, conscious of making comfort one of the priorities for patients, families, and friends,” he recounts.

### 3. Robert Nieminen, *Staying in the Moment*

When researching his article on mindfulness (p. 22), Robert was struck by the idea that “while distraction stifles creativity, mindfulness can boost it.” Creativity also is a large part of successfully designing for health and wellbeing, so it’s no surprise that Robert feels encouraged by this industry focus. “Much like the sustainable design movement in

the early 2000s, I believe wellness is on its way to market transformation as an increasing number of design firms and manufacturers are taking a much closer look at the genetic makeup of building materials, interior finishes, and furnishings—and determining how we can eliminate chemicals of concern that may have a negative impact on occupant health,” he says. “I see this playing out in the increasing number of projects that are being designed to certification programs..., as well as greater transparency among manufacturers.”

### 4. Diana Mosher, *A Moving Target*

“Design impacts lives.’ This ASID commitment is more relevant than ever as the wellness movement goes mainstream,” explains Diana, whose article on sustainable and wellness design standards (p. 38) highlights the role of the A&D community—now and in the future—in creating healthy spaces. “It’s up to designers to have the most current information about green rating systems and certifications... especially since new programs and revised versions are rolled out frequently. As I conducted interviews for my story, I was actually surprised that I had fallen behind in my knowledge about certifications,” she admits. “I am very familiar with LEED and WELL; however, I had a lot to learn about Fitwel criteria. Fitwel will be interesting news to design clients as well.”

### 5. Susan Sung Eun Chung, Ph.D., *The Power of Designing for All*

In her role as director of research and knowledge management at ASID, Susan was an ideal co-author for the article, “The Power of Designing for All” (p. 54), which proposed the benefits of wellbeing in universal design. “Designers, being true to their creative and curious nature, have been constantly gathering new information and establishing unique connections to fuel their ideas. Wellbeing has been a particularly interesting area where science and creativity intersect and result in more tangible outcomes,” she offers. “The design world has been ‘spilling over’ into other disciplines by engaging with experts in fields that aren’t seemingly natural in typical design practice—neuroscientists, botanists,

computational specialists, human resource managers, etc.—in order to tap into various fields of research. With wellbeing a topic shared by a multitude of disciplines (if not all), we can see more of this cross-pollination happening.”

### 6. Whitney Austin Gray, Ph.D., *The Power of Designing for All*

A co-author of “The Power of Designing for All” (p. 54) and the head of Delos Insights, Whitney is fascinated by the environmental human connection with universal design. In fact, when conducting the research for her article, she was surprised to find so few academic and industry resources that connect universal design with health and wellbeing, “perhaps signifying an opportunity to rethink about how being able to be mobile and active for all populations is critical to health. The environment can enable and, likewise, the environment can disable. I often wonder is it the person or the environment that is causing the disability?” says Whitney. Currently, she adds, health and wellness are not required in professional training programs in design, but “I think there is a tremendous opportunity to bring further education and opportunities forward between the fields of public health and design.”

### 7. Stephanie Timm, Ph.D., *The Power of Designing for All*

The third co-author of “The Power of Designing for All” (p. 54), Stephanie conducts research on how design impacts health and wellbeing as part of her role as senior director at Delos. When asked if the design world has been successful in addressing the many ways it can contribute to a person’s wellbeing, she responds, “Industry professionals are becoming more sophisticated in their understanding of what design elements make people feel the most comfortable, safe, and happy. They are tapping into decades of environmental design research to inform their current projects.” Stephanie adds, “We’re seeing many university programs teach courses and offer specializations in designing for health and wellbeing. This knowledge is translating to industry. In fact, almost 4,000 projects across 58 countries have applied for WELL certification.” ●



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HDR, a global engineering, architecture, environmental, and construction services firm, received a 3-Star Fitwel rating—the highest—for its new headquarters in Omaha. (Image: Courtesy of HDR. © 2019 Dan Schwalm)

# A Moving





By Diana Mosher

**Iterative design standards  
help drive a healthy built  
environment**

# Target

Designing environmentally friendly interiors has become the norm—but, how we define success continues to be a moving target. The latest standards go beyond attributes of the built environment to focus on the wellbeing of occupants. Rating systems are intended to help the A&D community adhere to agreed upon parameters and enable outcomes to be measured. But, with so many to choose from—and updated versions rolled out all the time—some designers admit they have become overwhelmed. Here, we take a look at three standards that are among those most talked about today, and discuss the details that set them apart.





There are more than 46,400 LEED-certified commercial projects and nearly 500,000 certified residential units in 175 countries and territories.  
(Image: Jeff Goldberg)

## LEED and the Climate Solution

Buildings are responsible for nearly 40 percent of global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub>. By greening the building sector, the A&D community is part of a climate solution that can improve lives. Launched in 2000 by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is the most widely used green building rating system in the world—and it's available for virtually all buildings, communities, and residential projects, according to Melissa Baker, senior vice president, LEED Technical Core for the USGBC. There are more than 46,400 LEED-certified commercial projects and nearly 500,000 certified residential units in 175 countries and territories.

"It's important that designers and architects be able to explain the benefits and role LEED plays in helping clients reach their goal," says Baker. In addition to the social and health reasons for building green, there's substantial research that shows green is good for business. "From cost savings to sale and rental premiums, green buildings can support every market and every community," she adds. "So, the question to clients should be, 'Why wouldn't you build green?'"

Under the latest version, LEED v4.1, project teams will find rating systems for new construction, interior spaces, existing buildings, residential projects, cities, and communities, as well as recertification. Residential project teams most likely will use one of the LEED v4.1 Residential rating systems, which include LEED v4.1 Residential: Single Family Homes, LEED v4.1 Residential: Multifamily, and LEED v4.1 Residential: Multifamily Core and Shell.

"Certifications for residential units are at an all-time high and have grown 19 percent since 2017," explains Baker. For commercial interiors, project teams will want to consider the LEED v4.1 for Interior Design and Construction and LEED v4.1 Operations and Maintenance: Existing Interiors rating systems. These options focus on the realities of interior spaces and are designed for the complete interior fit-out. The rating system can be applied to commercial interior spaces, retail, hospitality, and more. "This is the first time we've had an option for certification of existing interior spaces," notes Baker.

One of the hallmarks of LEED is continuous improvement, and recertification protects the building asset while keeping a client's sustainability investment in place. There is no set schedule for when standards are updated; in fact, these decisions typically are based on feedback from the market. "We're focused now on the adoption of LEED v4.1 and seeking feedback, ideas, and comments so we can understand where the future of LEED should be headed," says Baker.



## WELL Builds on LEED's Success

Launched in 2014 and administered in 55 countries (and counting) by the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI), the WELL Building Standard is the first rating system to focus exclusively on the impact of buildings on human health and wellness. "WELL gets to stand on the shoulders of the green building movement and the wild success of LEED and other green building rating systems," explains Rachel Gutter, president of IWBI.

"It's kind of astonishing that just last year our team was celebrating the milestone of 150 million square feet and, today, we're edging up on half a billion square feet of registered and certified projects," she adds. But, not all consumers are on board.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tells us that where you sit and who you sit next to has a greater impact on your state of health than access to healthcare, lifestyle, and behaviors—and even genetics. "But, when most people [in the United States] hear that stat, it kind of blows their mind," says Gutter. In fact, IWBI sees the highest levels of consumer demand in other parts of the world, where clean air is in danger of becoming a luxury and good or drinkable water is hard to come by.

The year-long pilot and recent launch of IWBI's WELL Portfolio program enables organizations to enroll multiple assets. Interest by multifamily investors is taking off. "And, just wait until you see the first WELL-certified sports stadium, airport, or shopping mall, whose owners are eager to celebrate their WELL achievements with everyone who passes through," says Gutter.

IWBI recently released WELL v2, which was developed, according to Gutter, in less than a year during a grueling and rewarding process that included nine global roundtables, a "deep scrub" for all the latest research across IWBI's 10 concept areas, and thousands of conversations with real estate leaders, architects, interior designers, sustainability consultants, academic researchers, healthcare practitioners, and human resource professionals.

Under WELL v2, projects can build a custom scorecard for their particular region and population. "We're really excited about the first beta features we've released that address new concepts like housing equity and sound transmission," says Gutter. Any well-intentioned project, from a tenant space to an existing building, could achieve certification without the need for major capital improvements. Going forward, the rapid improvements in sensor technologies will increasingly enable everyone to be in real-time dialogue with their buildings and homes.



Citi Tower at One Bay East achieved the first WELL Certification in Hong Kong. (Image: Uiso Hin Sing Tsang)

*"It's important that designers and architects be able to explain the benefits and role LEED plays in helping clients reach their goal. From cost savings to sale and rental premiums, green buildings can support every market and every community."*

—MELISSA BAKER, U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL





Fitwel is an evidence-based standard that draws from an analysis of the impact that the design and operation of buildings has on human health.

- 1.** The WELL Building Standard places focus on the impact of buildings on human health and wellness. (Image: IWBI)
- 2.** Lemay chose to transform a neglected 1950s-era warehouse in Montreal's South-West neighborhood for its growing team. The project received a 3-Star Fitwel rating. (Image: Courtesy of Lemay. © Adrien Williams)
- 3.** LEED v4.1 includes rating systems for new construction, interior spaces, existing buildings, residential projects, cities, and communities, as well as recertification. (Image: Jasper Sanidad Photography)
- 4.** At press time, LEED v4 Commercial Interiors certification was in progress for the headquarters Perkins+Will designed for Madison Marquette in Washington, D.C. (Image: Max McKenzie)
- 5.** Designed by Perkins+Will, the headquarters for the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) achieved both LEED Platinum and WELL Platinum certifications—benefits that promised to improve the organization's productivity, efficiency, and creativity. (Image: Eric Laignel)



## Fitwel Drives Market Transformation

Already boasting a presence in 35 countries since its debut in 2017, the Fitwel Certification System was created by the CDC for implementation in the properties of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Fitwel is an evidence-based standard that draws from CDC's analysis of the impact that the design and operation of buildings has on human health. Fitwel is operated by the Center for Active Design (CfAD), the nonprofit organization launched by businessman and former Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2012 to transform New York City's groundbreaking Active Design program into an international movement.

"Over the last five years, [the Center for Active Design's] work has gone global, reaching over 180 countries and informing the design of buildings and public infrastructure projects," states Joanna Frank, president and CEO of CfAD. "Our mission is actually market transformation. Fitwel is a really efficient way to share this incredible evidence base that has come from public health with those who are making the decisions around buildings."

Fitwel Ambassadors, who are leaders and active participants in Fitwel's healthy building movement, also help spread the understanding of how health is impacted by the built environment. No prior expertise in health or building systems is required for the Fitwel Ambassador Course and Exam, which, at press time, were based on the Fitwel v2 Scorecard and Reference Guides.

"Fitwel is different from LEED," explains Frank. "We don't look at a building and say, 'Do you think this mechanical system impacts health?' We look at the CDC research and say, 'What is the research around air quality and human health? Is there a way that a building impacts that particular health outcome?'"

Now, there are more than 5,000 peer-reviewed public health research studies supporting the strategies in Fitwel. "We just went through a revision of the standard to reflect the growing evidence base," adds Frank. The Ambassador Course is scheduled to be updated to align with the Fitwel v2.1 content in fall 2019.

An expanded standard was launched in June for international projects. Fitwel is appropriate for an array of property types, from retail to office and from affordable to market-rate housing. It is applicable for existing buildings, as well as new construction. "We are seeing a tremendous growth period," says Frank. "The South and the Midwest are very quickly catching up with coastal areas as far as the number of projects. I think [the South [might]] overtake the Northeast this year."

## The Practitioner Viewpoint

Most design clients aren't interested in tackling more than two certification programs at a time, especially if they're trying to achieve the more rigorous upper levels of certification. "Our conversations with clients typically start around LEED, because that's what most are familiar with, and then it moves into educating them about WELL and Fitwel and deciding which rating system is better suited for them and their project goals. Then, it's a conversation about how does this layer in with LEED," says David Cordell, an associate principal/senior technical coordinator/sustainability leader at Perkins+Will, who also is an accredited professional for both LEED and WELL and is a Fitwel ambassador as well.

There's plenty of research on how natural materials improve cognitive abilities or lower blood pressure. But, if you're designing for true wellbeing, then it's a more holistic goal that goes beyond physiology. And, as Cordell points out, that's harder to analyze. "LEED was able to get a foothold because there was data to measure and understand," he explains. However, anecdotal data is what largely tells the story of the human side of things, which is the whole point of design for wellbeing. In Cordell's view, WELL and Fitwel are trying to achieve much the same thing, but they go about it a little differently.

The designer notes that accreditations that are additive to getting licensed in a core profession, such as design or architecture, are the clearest way to convey passion about a topic, as well as expertise. Cordell, who originally planned to study psychology, decided he could influence people's wellbeing via design instead: "There's the idea that design should create a sense of wonder or joy and hope." He finds that the standards absolutely help this objective by including biophilia and art elements that impact a building occupant's mental, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing.

In the past decade, the marketplace has experienced an amazing shift. Design clients increasingly are aware that where they live and work impacts wellbeing. There's never been a better time for designers to become the experts who can help their clients achieve these goals. ●

**DIANA MOSHER**, Allied ASID, is a New York-based interior designer and media consultant. She also is the 2017-2019 communications director for the ASID New York Metro chapter.



By Michele Keith

# In Suppo

**Increasingly, product designers and manufacturers have made a point of contributing to individual wellbeing through collections that address the topic in a variety of ways**

From patterns that mimic nature and colors that invoke peaceful feelings, to chemical-free products, to those with biophilic elements that incorporate natural materials, light, vegetation, outdoor views, and other experiences of our world, wellbeing has become top of mind in the design industry. Such innovations are examples of how design can better a person's life and, therefore, perhaps, better the world as well.

*i+D* spoke with four pioneering manufacturers to get their take on this. No surprise, they've been on the road to wellness for some time, and now are working with a variety of experts and advanced scientific systems to achieve their highest goals.



Designed by Ilse Crawford,  
nanimarquina's Wellbeing  
collection focuses on  
tactility, materiality, craft,  
and quality to add warmth,  
softness, and comfort to  
indoor environments, as well  
as a connection to the senses.  
(Image: nanimarquina; photography  
by Albert Font)

# Art of Wellness





Among the color palettes in Sherwin-Williams' 2020 forecast is Mantra, which is comprised of nine softly muted neutral interior paint colors influenced by "Minimalism, Serenity, Scandinese, and Spa."  
(Image: The Sherwin-Williams Company)

## Products that Help People Feel Better

Mohawk Group's Jackie Dettmar, vice president of design and product development, says, "Coming across such stats as Americans spending \$300 billion every year to combat stress-induced illnesses is mind-boggling! We at Mohawk believe that if we can do anything to help create environments that could potentially give people relief, we *must* do it."

Entrenched in a "believe in better" philosophy, the commercial flooring company is not new to the idea of creating a sense of wellbeing. For nearly 20 years, Mohawk has been putting as much into research as aesthetics—and making products that are free of toxins, regenerative to nature, and likely to contribute to quality of life.

Noting that interior designers are leaders in the cause, having always endeavored to create more tranquil and healthy environments, as well as more beautiful ones, Dettmar explains that Mohawk's latest response to this need is its Relaxing Floors modular carpet system, which was launched in September. Two years of research were conducted in conjunction with Austrian product design firm 13&9 and Richard Taylor, NASA advisor; physics, psychology, and art professor at the University of Oregon; and founder of Fractals Research Inc. According to Dettmar, the research focused on fractals (the infinitely complex patterns found in nature, such as trees, rivers, and seashells), which Dettmar says have "been scientifically proven to reduce stress levels up to 60 percent" when placed within a person's visual environment. Their collaboration included the development of software to create and measure fractal patterns of varying complexities. These concepts were then translated into patterns for the carpeting.


The carpets also look good. Derived from nature, the colors include warm-cool combinations in shades of gray, tan, terra cotta, and gold. All in all, this floor covering is the "culmination of art, science, and human-centered design," says Dettmar. "Plus, they are well-priced, so are available to the widest group of people possible.

"When we first got into this," she adds, "we were thinking only of a product for the workplace, it so often being a major cause of stress. But, as we dug deeper, we realized that there are many other applications that can help people feel better. We see it as an opportunity for our sales team to reach out to hospitals, schools, hotels, and airports—anywhere people feel anxious."

Eventually wanting everything Mohawk makes to reflect these discoveries, the company will do follow-up later on, working with Taylor on virtual reality programs and, then, with installations in public spaces and surveying people's reactions. "Manufacturers definitely have a role to play in creating products that improve our lives," concludes Dettmar. "There's something special about the flooring industry. It's leading the way in sustainable development using research, such as ours. It's simply a question of stepping up and doing the right thing."

*"We're all in tune with the idea of mindful living, that we must take a break from the craziness of life and do something for ourselves. A home reflecting this idea helps to accomplish this."*

—SUE WADDEN, THE SHERWIN-WILLIAMS COMPANY



Fractals, which are patterns in nature that have been found to help reduce stress, are at the visual core of Mohawk Group's Relaxing Floors modular carpet system.  
(Image: Mohawk Group)





## The Influence of Color

Taking a more anecdotal approach, Sue Wadden, director of color marketing at The Sherwin-Williams Company, says that when the firm's Global Forecast Team of color professionals met to determine the new colors for 2020, "it was almost a no-brainer. There are always big topics to talk about, but, this year, it was universal. Wellness is such a big influence it couldn't *not* be discussed."

Following three days of analyzing the macro themes of consumer culture and design that they had gleaned from attending numerous trade shows here and abroad, and reading countless trend reports, the forecasting team began to whittle down the information to those concepts they felt were most important. The result was a "good snapshot" of what was going on in the marketplace. "By the end of the week," Wadden recalls, "we had agreed on the colors and the direction to take—warmth, shades that feel human and natural, and [that] pave the way to wellness and self-nurturance."

Wadden then had the idea of using a mandala, a 1st century geometric motif without beginning or end, to present the 2020 colors. Segmented into five palettes—Alive, Mantra, Play, Haven, and Heart—each is represented by nine trend colors

that express four "influences" from the design world, and the understanding of what is needed to bring joy, serenity, and focus to the body, mind, and spirit. Mantra, for example, is a serene group of chalky pastels, with a nod to Scandinavian, which combines Nordic and Japanese aesthetics.

"Grounding these new colors in something real like this, makes so much sense," she says. "So far, the feedback has been very positive. It feels like the entire industry is going in this direction."

While Wadden states that color is "too hard to quantify," she does believe that, intuitively, we know the effect color has on us: "We're all in tune with the idea of mindful living, that we must take a break from the craziness of life and do something for ourselves. A home reflecting this idea helps to accomplish this. It's going to guide the conversation for the next decade."

Sherwin-Williams' Color of the Year is Naval, a rich navy within the Alive palette. "Reminiscent of the night sky, which for centuries people have looked to for guidance, it strikes a balance between calm and confident," Wadden says, "where Art Deco glamour meets the serenity of a yoga studio...the new approachable neutral that goes with everything."



## The Benefits of Biophilia

Another company “doing the right thing” is Designtex, a manufacturer of applied materials for the built environment—upholstery, wallcoverings, panel fabrics, window coverings, and 3M Di-NOC architectural finishes.

“The foundation of our work,” says Sara Balderi, principal designer, “is centered around the idea of the psychology of a space: how what surrounds us influences how we experience that space on a multisensory level, especially important in healthcare environments where the goal is to make people feel better, and to bring a sense of calm, clarity, and connectedness; and in the built environment, where it’s about creating spaces that satisfy our innate need for contact with nature.”

Designtex’s new Biophilia 2.0 Collection is composed of eight woven and coated textile healthcare upholstery designs incorporating biophilic design principles, which include the use of natural materials, natural light, vegetation, nature views, and other experiences of the natural world.

Biophilia, according to Balderi, literally means “love of nature. We, as humans, through evolutionary adaption, are drawn to nature and reap benefits through our interaction with it. It’s this primitive, intrinsic connection that we at Designtex continue to explore. There is a growing body of research focusing on how and why our brains are hardwired to react to nature’s different elements and principles. As neuroscientist Thomas D. Albright of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, with whom we’ve worked, cited, ‘...we have one notable tool that promises a new perspective on how buildings influence our mental states: the modern field of neuroscience.’”

Throughout a year-and-a-half, Designtex’s team developed the Biophilia 2.0 Collection by exploring the algorithms, textures, colors, shapes, and mathematical arrangements, along with the chaos theory and the Fibonacci sequence, that affect nature’s patterns. Their findings inspired the density, arrangements, and variations seen in each of the patterns created for the collection. “In the built environment,” Balderi explains, “it’s about creating spaces that satisfy our innate need for contact with nature.”

Balderi adds that as long ago as 1859, when Florence Nightingale spoke of the benefits of light and color on healing and illness, evidence has suggested that nature elements or views can be effective as stress-reducing, positive distractions that promote wellness in healthcare environments. “Now, what was once design ‘instinct,’ has the benefit of proven research.

“I’m very hopeful that material selection continues to follow this thoughtful and comprehensive process,” says Balderi.



*“We, as humans, through evolutionary adaption, are drawn to nature and reap benefits through our interaction with it.”*

—SARA BALDERI, DESIGNTEX

Air, rain water, and rock striations are among the inspirations behind Designtex’s new Biophilia 2.0 Collection of applied materials for healthcare spaces. (Image: Designtex)



## Supporting the Human Experience

Since establishing nanimarquina in 1987, Nani Marquina, based in Barcelona and New York City, has had only one aim: “to create rugs that convey emotions and a sense of wellbeing.”

A global thinker who not only manufactures in India and Pakistan, but does her “bit to improve the lives of the people there,” Marquina recently brought out her new Wellbeing collection designed by Londoner Ilse Crawford of Studioilse. The two had previously worked successfully together, no doubt in part due to the women’s similar takes on life; Crawford is known for putting human needs and desires at the center of all she creates.

“The main goal for the Wellbeing collection,” says Marquina, “was to create a wellness atmosphere through different products. The set criteria for the rugs, cushions, indoor hammock, throw, and wall tapestry that we had decided upon were natural, sustainable, and local fibers; hand spinning; no bleach; and no dyes.”

Crawford adds that these choices were made “to minimize the impact on people and the environment and to create a system of wellbeing.” She elaborates: “We look at everything from the point of view of the human experience, and also how we can make changes in the way things are made—not just designed, but made—so it affects the whole system.”

Nani Marquina, nanimarquina, and Ilse Crawford, Studioilse, collaborated to bring the Wellbeing collection to life. (Image: nanimarquina; photography by Albert Font)



“I am interested in wellbeing in its systemic sense,” Crawford continues. “After all, we are the system. Every dollar we spend, every decision we make as designers, is a vote, and affects the bigger picture for good or bad. But, it is possible to create a set of design and economic tenets that work towards human happiness and wellbeing. As designers, we need to take responsibility.”

While all nanimarquina projects require research and experimentation, Marquina notes the challenge in creating the Wellbeing collection was “to get an attractive and desirable product. We already had the knowledge needed for rugs, but our artisans hadn’t made a hammock or a tapestry before. The result was an amazing journey of learning and motivation.”

As to the future of wellbeing in design, Marquina says, “I think people need products they believe in, that make you feel good when you buy them, and provide a sense of wellbeing. Westerners, who live primarily in cities, need to be surrounded by beauty in order to connect with nature and craft. What could be better than the products of our daily lives evoking nature? We all live with so much technology; we need to find balance with handcrafted things.”

“Ultimately,” Crawford states, “our values are embedded in the material world we make. This means creating environments where humans feel comfortable, public spaces that make people feel at home, and homes that are habitable and make sense for the people who live in them. It means selecting and designing furniture and products that support and enhance human behavior and actions in everyday life. The things we use [and] the spaces we inhabit change the way we feel, the way we behave, the way we connect. But, this is not only about the people who use them, [it is] also about how they are made and their environmental impact.”

“The Wellbeing project,” Marquina adds, “doesn’t have an end. Ilse and I have already discussed the possibility of continuing our collaboration.” They most likely will be joined by many others, for, as she says, “not only does interior design need to be created to make people feel better, but architecture, urban planning... *everything* has to be designed to make people feel better.” ●

### MICHELE KEITH

is a New York-based writer whose work has appeared in The New York Times, ASPIRE Design and Home, Luxury Listings NYC, and DESIGN, among other magazines. She also has written two coffee table books for The Monacelli Press: Designers Here and There and Designers Abroad.



The Wellbeing collection uses handspun Afghan wool, nettle, jute, cork, wood, raw cotton, and more—all of which are carefully sourced by the nanimarquina team. (Image: nanimarquina; photography by Albert Font)



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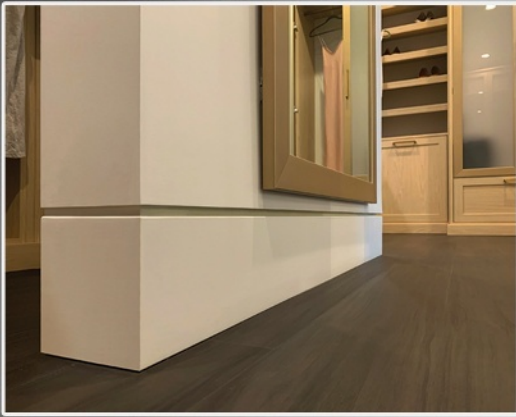
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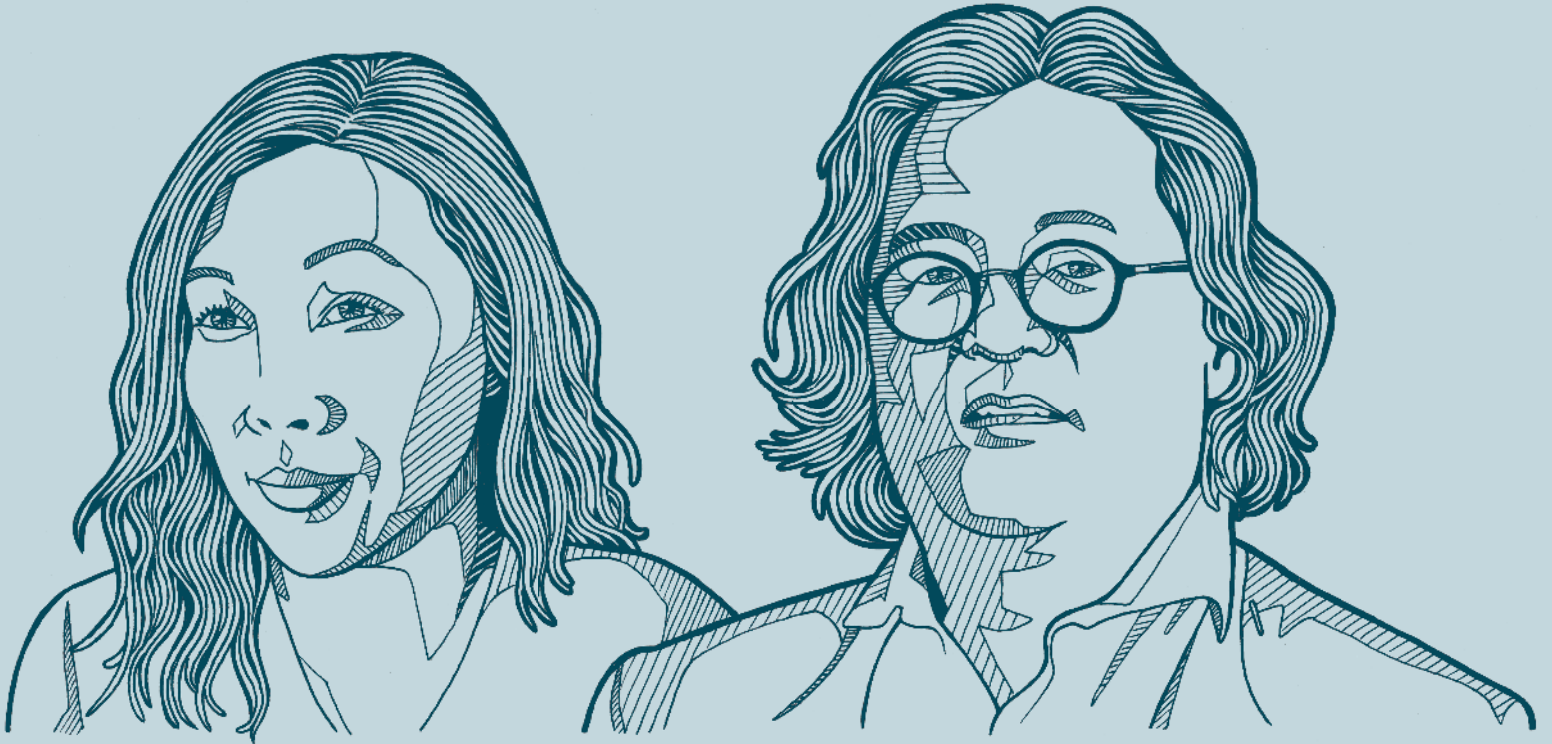
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ICONic Profile



**Susan Chang  
& Joey Shimoda**



*If you're looking for the place where cutting-edge meets comfort, look no further than Shimoda Design Group. This small, Los Angeles-based firm thinks big, but sweats the details, with founders and partners Joey Shimoda and Susan Chang creating award-winning projects. These include aspects of the re-imagined Steelcase headquarters in Michigan; the dazzling Museum of Neon Art in Los Angeles; and The Wheeler, an ongoing office building project in Brooklyn—all examples of restoration and new construction that are achieving hand-in-glove symmetry. The firm lists such clients as Rolex, Mikimoto, Netflix, Viacom, and Bloomberg, to name just a few instantly recognizable brands, and the partners have been graced with numerous professional honors for their work.*

*Shimoda grew up in Alabama and finished high school in northern California. He has a degree in architecture from California Polytechnic State University, studied in Florence, and is a member of the College of Fellows for both The American Institute of Architects and the International Interior Design Association.*

*Chang grew up in L.A. and has a degree in architecture from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She has lectured at Woodbury University and at SCAD Lacoste (France).*

*The couple live and work in the same building—"a very short commute for L.A.," as Shimoda describes it—in a converted four-story warehouse in the Arts District.*

**i+D: Many people are unaware that L.A. has always been a center for the graphic arts, and you're in the heart of it. What's new in the District these days?**

**Shimoda:** It's changed so much. When I first got to L.A., I was having some work photographed and it was done in the building we're in now on Traction Avenue. I thought it was so cool. There were ordinances to allow people to live without kitchens or heating and cooling. It was largely manufacturing, where a single artist could have 8,000 square feet.

**Chang:** This was the punk scene in L.A. Around the corner was Al's Bar, where all the early punk bands would come in. It was our CBGB's, but not as cool. (Laughing)

**Shimoda:** The neighborhood has completely gentrified in the last five years to a point we're starting to wonder if we can stay.

**i+D: When you met, you were working for the same firm. Did you immediately get along?**

**Shimoda:** We were with a group of like-minded people and did a lot of things outside the office. It was Lauren Rottet's firm. She continues to be a mentor and a dear friend. She created a whole, very collegial environment.

**i+D: When did you know you wanted to be partners?**

**Shimoda:** We realized that in a big corporate company, if you stick around too long, you'd make too much money and wouldn't be able to leave.

**i+D: Do you ever argue?**

**Chang:** We argue about practice and design and treatment. (Laughing) Spirited conversations.

**i+D: Do you have a code you use to let the other one know you're having a bad day?**

**Shimoda:** The bad days and the good days seem to happen every day.

**i+D: Who has the better head for business?**

**Shimoda:** Susan.

**Chang:** Wait. (Laughing) I don't know if I agree with that.

**i+D: Let's not argue. When you were kids, who were the people who inspired you?**

**Shimoda:** Growing up in the South, tensions were still very much there. We had an egg farm. Our family wasn't in the community—we were one of two Asian families. My dad was born here and was in the internment camps [for Japanese residents during World War II] when he was 11. My mom was from Japan. Neither of them had gone to college. I always knew I was different, but teachers I had—they could see I was an anomaly in the southern world and could see I could draw and encouraged me. They talked to me about architecture—I had no idea what architecture was.

**Chang:** From an early age, my dad and my dad's youngest sister, my aunt, were the ones. My aunt taught graphic design, and my dad loved classical music and wanted to be a violinist. They could see I liked drawing and encouraged me.

**i+D: The Wheeler building in Brooklyn presents unique challenges in that part of it was constructed before the Brooklyn Bridge.**

**How do you balance old and new? And, does it ever come down to a choice: old or new?**

**Shimoda:** It comes up a lot. In my career, when I was learning, there was a certain feeling that no one knew what they were doing. And, at some point, the project would tell us what to do. Our process revolves around that, where we're trying not to bring too much preconception to the answers. The restoration aspect is about respect and opportunity. The Brooklyn building gave us so much interesting outdoor space and has all the classical architectural components in it. So, when we first started, we looked at it and said, "We've got to keep all this old stuff because it makes people more connected to the property." Charm is hard to repeat.

**i+D: What's the difference between doing an office building and the Museum of Neon Art? Besides, of course, the Neon museum being more fun.**

**Chang:** With the office building, there's a program, what a client or developer wants. With the Neon museum, it needed space and it needed a lot of electricity. That's what drove it.

**Shimoda:** The museum was an old-school Rite Aid building. But, to answer: pretty different. A museum has an ever-changing element that has to be considered.

**i+D: What were your first jobs as kids?**

**Chang:** I worked at a pharmacy my junior year in high school. I learned how to be a cashier and stocked goods and, eventually, I worked helping the pharmacist count pills.

**i+D: Lessons learned?**

**Chang:** How to react in a customer service situation. There were a lot of cranky people who needed drugs.

**Shimoda:** I hung out at a bike shop. I pretended to work there. They never paid me. I was 11 or 12. Then, I worked in a pizza restaurant when I was 14. Started out back-of-the-house, then I started making pizzas. All the kids were at my house eating leftover pizza.

**i+D: I've read that you always want to push your clients further than they want to go. What methods do you use for that?**

**Shimoda:** At the first meeting, we ask what is really important to them. And, we get to know them on a personal level. Everyone has multiple passions and we want to amplify their ideas.

**i+D: What do you always have with you?**

**Chang:** I don't think I have one specific thing.

**Shimoda:** My dog, a wire fox terrier named Bowie, as in David.

**i+D: Do people close to you tell you that you work too hard?**

**Shimoda:** Oh, yeah. My mom.

**Chang:** Joey tells me I'm working too hard. And, I always say, "Some things *have* to get done."

**i+D: When you travel to a place you've never been, what's the first thing you look for?**

**Shimoda:** When I was studying in Europe, the first thing I did was find the tallest place to look out over a city. I travel about three months out of the year. It's a lot, but it keeps my eyes open. The antenna is up a little higher.

**Chang:** The natural tendency is to seek out a museum. And, certainly, what restaurant I'm going to go to.

**i+D: When you were kids, what was the first thing you designed or built?**

**Shimoda:** My neighbor had a really steep hill and we made this roller coaster thing with little cars. It didn't go well at all.

**i+D: Injuries?**

**Shimoda:** We'd fall off right away

**Chang:** I was about eight, and turned the dining room table on its side and piled up boxes around it for a private space. I thought it was private, but it *was* in the middle of the dining room. ●

**AMBROSE CLANCY**

*is the editor of the Shelter Island Reporter and a novelist, nonfiction author, and journalist. His work has appeared in GQ, The Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times.*



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# The Power Designing



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Residences at La Mandarina)



# of for All

**Designing for the  
extremes may  
benefit the means**

**By  
Stephanie Timm, Ph.D.,  
Whitney Austin Gray, Ph.D., and  
Susan Sung Eun Chung, Ph.D.**

Ninety percent of U.S. homeowners over 65-years-old report they would prefer to stay in their home as they age.<sup>1</sup> The American Institute of Architects' *2016 Home Design Trend Survey*<sup>2</sup> found that the desire to "age in place" is a top driver of current architectural work. Accessibility features, single floor plans, and open floor plans all were top five trends in home layout and design.<sup>2</sup> However, a recent AARP survey found adults aged 50-plus-years-old lack housing features that could make them more comfortable and safe as the effects of aging set in. Respondents reported an absence of aging-friendly home elements, such as wide doorways (63 percent), non-slip floor surfaces (40 percent), and/or bathroom aids, e.g., hold bars (77 percent).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sample size was approximately 500 U.S. residential architectural firms.



## Designing for All Ages and Lifestyles

In 2014, 46.2 million people were aged 65 or older (14.5 percent of the total population). By 2060, this number is expected to double to more than 98 million.<sup>4</sup> It is likely, therefore, that demand for residential units built to accommodate those planning to age independently will increase significantly. Building features, products, and technology that can be adapted to those addressing a dynamic range of abilities or situations will be key to tapping fully into the future housing market.

Configuration of an environment in a way that is usable, comfortable, and safe by all people to the greatest extent possible is commonly referred to as “universal design.”<sup>5-7</sup> Often, universal design features are simply standard building components that are selected more thoughtfully, resized, or more strategically placed.<sup>8</sup> Common examples include additional peepholes that are placed lower on front doors, wider-than-normal doorways, and stepless entryways. These are features that are obviously helpful to someone with an injury or in a wheelchair—but also are helpful for less obvious users, such as a parent with a stroller or a mover trying to maneuver a new king-size mattress into a bedroom.

“When I reached my 50s and my older friends began to be diagnosed with life-changing physical and neurological conditions affecting their strength and cognitive acuity, I realized that unless I made my own home as welcoming as their own, they would not be able to continue to visit or join our gatherings of friends and relatives,” says Lisa Bonneville, owner, principal, and a Massachusetts certified interior designer of Bonneville Design. “I saw this as a responsibility, not as a favor to them. Until my own home is completely transformed to be accessible (wheelchair use, as the model), it will not meet my standard for inclusiveness and ‘visitability.’ My husband and I are working on it, through phased remodeling projects, because we want the choice to be ours—to age in our home.”

The Center for Universal Design has identified 14 priority design features that anyone should consider if they are planning on remodeling their home—regardless of age.<sup>9</sup> If incorporated strategically within a remodel, most of these features will not significantly impact the cost of the project or negatively impact its appearance.<sup>8</sup> They will, however, maximize the number of users who can comfortably use the space, both now and in the future. See the 14 features in the sidebar, p. 57.

## Building for Health and Wellbeing

Expanding upon the goal of universal design—a design that enhances occupant health and wellbeing holistically—is identified as one of the top five emerging themes in real estate.<sup>10</sup> Given that nearly half of all U.S. adults have a preventable, and costly, chronic disease, medical and building professionals are keen to harness the power of design to help encourage healthier lifestyles through improvements in such areas as air quality, water quality, nutrition, and fitness.<sup>11</sup>

But, just how effective is design in influencing health and wellbeing?



Kitchen by Bonneville Design includes features such as a convertible cook top, sink base cabinetry that pulls out for knee space, and clear paths of travel with full turning radius in the center to accommodate aging-in-place. (Image: Bonneville Design)

Homes designed to accommodate aging, sick, or disabled people can benefit *everyone's* long-term comfort, safety, and independence.



A Texas home by Laura Britt Design was intentionally designed for residents with a history of respiratory problems and creates a healthy environment for all residents and guests. (Image: Leonid Furmansky)



Science suggests that it could be one of the most important factors affecting how much we move, what we eat, how we manage stress, and how fast we recover from disease or injury. For example, diffused lighting and glare reduction in homes can minimize discomfort for those with cataracts (clouding of the eye lens).<sup>12</sup> Views of nature may help hospital patients recover faster and use less pain medication than those without views to nature.<sup>13</sup> And, proper acoustical design can help calm and engage dementia patients who can suffer from confusion, illusions, frustration, and agitation caused by over- or under-exposure to noise.<sup>14</sup>

Homes designed to accommodate aging, sick, or disabled people can benefit *everyone's* long-term comfort, safety, and independence. For example, in a Texas home where mother and son have a history of respiratory problems (i.e., asthma), the design intentionally included a variable refrigerant flow (VRF) heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system and a supplemental dehumidification system, in addition to natural ventilation, to reduce dust mites, allergens, and off-gassing. Ultimately, these components also create a healthy environment for all residents and guests.<sup>15</sup>

#### DESIGN SOLUTIONS MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Optimize your **air quality** through reducing indoor air pollutants and providing adequate filtration and ventilation.
- Optimize your **water quality** through filtration and treatment.
- Make **healthy food choices** the easy choice by increasing access and visibility to healthy food, and limiting portion sizes by using smaller cups and plates.
- Optimize your **lighting design** to provide adequate daylight, reduce glare, and align with circadian rhythms.
- Encourage **physical activity** through active design.
- Create places that are **thermally comfortable, ergonomic, and universally accessible**.
- Optimize your **cognitive health** through incorporating natural elements and beauty into the design.

Residential wellness programming can bring these evidence-based features to single-family and multifamily homes. One&Only Mandarin Private Homes at One&Only Mandarin in Riviera Nayarit, Mexico, for example, were designed with a number of amenities, such as an air purification system that reduces pollutants inhaled by residents and circadian lighting that helps regulate their hormone levels and sleep-wake cycles.

## 14 Universal Design Features



<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>
One entrance without steps and a flat or very low threshold	Minimum 60" level maneuvering space at stepless entrance	Hall widths of 42"
<b>4.</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>6.</b>
Passage doors 32" clear	Maneuvering space at doors	Increased number of electrical outlets for additional lighting and alarm indicators, especially in bedrooms
<b>7.</b>	<b>8.</b>	<b>9.</b>
Clear floor space in kitchens	Adaptable cabinets to reveal kneespace at sink and under work surface near cooking appliances	Clear floor space in bathroom
<b>10.</b>	<b>11.</b>	<b>12.</b>
Adaptable cabinets with under-sink kneespace	Broadly applied bands of reinforcement inside walls around toilets for grab bars	Tub or shower controls that minimize stooping, bending, reaching
<b>13.</b>	<b>14.</b>	
Toilet in a 48" x 56" space with centerline of toilet 18" from sidewall	Curbless showers, at least 36" x 60"	





The entrance to this home, designed by Bonneville Design, starts at the driveway and entry sidewalk, continues through this 36-inch doorway, and into an open path of travel to all other areas of the home.  
(Image: Sam Gray)

## Living by Design Universal Design

# The Benefits of Building for All

The benefits of designing for life, whether for enhancing health and wellbeing or for encouraging longevity, are surmountable. As the population continues to both grow and live longer, the need for housing that supports aging healthfully in place will continue to rise. Designers incorporating universal design principles, along with healthy building standards, in the initial home remodeling plans do not raise significant costs to spatial edits, but, rather, add compelling benefits to the occupants.

“In 2011, we transformed a home for aging-in-place and added an attached in-law apartment, with 36-inch doorways and flush thresholds throughout the home, a widened staircase to allow for a stair lift, landscaped for graded walkways, added a roll-in shower stall, provided wall blocking in every anticipated area, and framed an internal shaft for a future elevator with a stop on the outdoor patio,” explains Robert Marshall, Robert Marshall & Sons, Inc., a Massachusetts general contractor. “These changes increased the value of the house and allowed the homeowner’s parent to live independently.”

A research study comparing the costs of remodeling to age at home and moving to an assisted living facility calculated potential annual savings of approximately \$16,000<sup>b</sup>, depending on the various scenarios that considered home ownership (e.g., mortgage, rent, condo association fee) and healthcare needs.<sup>16</sup> From a specific case study included in the research, the cost to upgrade a home to universal design standards could be amortized in 45 months and enjoyed for years.

These upgrades have been well worth the effort. The aim now is to help as many people as possible experience these same benefits.

*Learn more about enhancing health and wellbeing through design at [www.delos.com](http://www.delos.com) and [www.asid.org](http://www.asid.org). Read more about residential universal design within *The Center for Universal Design’s Residential Rehabilitation, Remodeling and Universal Design publication* and through the *National Association of Home Builders’ Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) designation program*. Many cities (such as the City of Irvine, California) also offer voluntary universal design programs and comprehensive universal design renovation checklists.*

For endnotes, please see p. 60. ●

### **STEPHANIE TIMM, PH.D.**

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### **WHITNEY AUSTIN GRAY, PH.D.**

*leads research and the development of innovative strategies at Delos that seek to improve human health and wellbeing through building design, and also is an adjunct assistant professor at Georgetown University. She received her doctorate from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and was the first public health professional to become LEED AP.*

### **SUSAN SUNG EUN CHUNG, PH.D.**

*is the director of research and knowledge management at the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), where she investigates the impact of design and translates research into applicable design implications—all with the purpose to connect design and research to improve human experiences in the interior environment.*

<sup>b</sup> Estimated costs calculated from Massachusetts state averages for fiscal 2014.



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www.delos.com  
Laura Britt Design  
www.laurabrittdesign.com  
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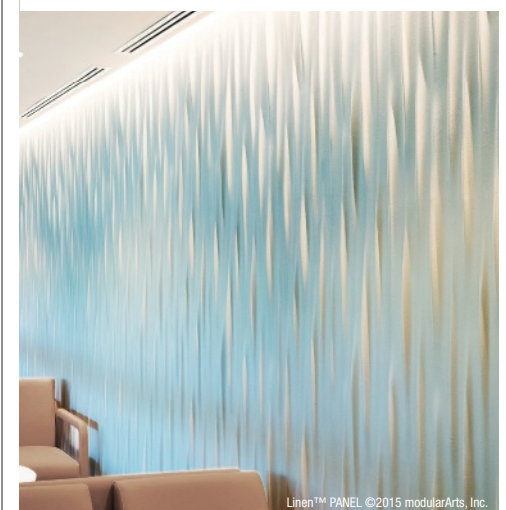
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There is no question that homes are getting smarter every day. The increasing amount of technology being developed to make personal residences run more easily and efficiently is staggering, and the tech seems to know no bounds, with everything from who is at the front door to how to cook that new recipe—and what wine to pair with it—only a click away. In the November/December issue, *i+D* will dig into the ever-evolving world of tech for the home and the increasing amount of knowledge design professionals must possess to be sure a home of their design is sufficiently equipped with the most modern advances without sacrificing visual appeal in any way. ●

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