

Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES EDITION

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THE SPECIAL
ELECTION

Gov. Vows More Ballot Efforts

The four measures in Tuesday's election that Schwarzenegger is stumping for are only the beginning, he says on the campaign trail.

By PETER NICHOLAS



HONORING ANCESTORS: Durbin a candidate's night. Photo by Robert Dunbar, Los Angeles Times

THE SCOUT



LivingStone

Heart of stones

By DAVID A. KEEPS
Times Staff Writer

FOR Olivier Morange, being a stoner is serious business. The French designer scours the globe for exotic quarries including powdery white limestone from Brazil and coppery slate from India. Last week he opened LivingStone, a showroom for upscale tile, custom surfaces for kitchens and baths, furniture and accessories. His lofty, cream-colored renovation of a barrel-ceilinged storefront on La Cienega Boulevard includes an indoor Zen garden installation, above, a custom order. Other stars of the showroom are Morange's designs: monolithic Parsons consoles and tables constructed from square slabs of stone (from \$3,500) and glass water walls framed by solid stone (from \$4,500). Go by the store and you'll see a magnificent bathtub in the window. Described by Morange as "wider and lower than traditional tubs and built to hold two," the white limestone Womb lists for \$28,000. 937 N. La Cienega Blvd.; (310) 659-0600; www.livinstoneusa.com.

FRIDAY
DECEMBER 2, 2005

DAILY

Reed Business
Information.

VARIETY



CEMENTING HOME DECOR

By ALISON MANHEIM

In the prose of the Multiple Listing Service, concrete floors and granite counters are the current come-ons of choice. However, ripping out the carpet is no guarantee of industrial chic.

"The material has to be well integrated into the design," says Brian Linder of Keller-Williams in Beverly Hills. "Concrete, glass and steel work great together. Concrete and drywall? Less interesting."

Concrete has long been a favorite inside industrial buildings and artists' lofts that want to convey an "edgy" feel. For the Las Vegas outpost of Wolfgang Puck's Chinois, Steve Jones, principal of SFJones Architects in Marina del Rey, stained concrete with a chemical that deposits a glossy, jade-green patina.

"Even though it's a cheap material, concrete's not a cheap alternative," says Jones, who estimates that he treated 2,000 square feet, at a cost \$12.50 per square foot — not including the concrete floor itself.

Not bad for a humble building material that's a simple mixture of aggregate (the chunky bits), water, sand, gravel and the cement that holds it all together. Nor is it a swift process; concrete must cure, or set, for 28 days before it can be stained.

James DeWulf's DeWulf Concrete dodges this problem by using integral pigmentation to produce concrete slabs the color of green tea ice cream or Silly Putty. DeWulf then turns these slabs into sinks, vanities, tables and countertops.

A former real estate developer in Atlanta, DeWulf moved to Los Angeles after the real estate market faltered following 9/11. While an apprentice to a manufacturer of concrete countertops, he discovered that he loved the process of pouring concrete into custom-designed molds.

"There's something alive about concrete," says DeWulf. "You can't help running your fingers over it."

Olivier Morange thinks he can go concrete one better. In late October, he opened LivinStone in West Hollywood, an "organic design service" and retail showroom for home furnishings and accessories made of imported slate, limestone, travertine and onyx.

"Stone is natural," he says. "Concrete is not."

Morange worked in New York and Sydney before moving to Los Angeles earlier this year. It's a great market because, he asserts, Angelenos expect their homes to function as sanctuaries, and stone possesses a natural serenity as well as a healing quality.

On a practical level, our low-rise housing stock is more suited than, say, a Manhattan high-rise, to delivering a 1,500-pound bathtub or a 700-pound table. However, one of Morange's most popular products are 24"x24" limestone floor tiles. Although they're susceptible to scratching, they appear almost seamless when installed, stay cool in warm weather and are warm when it's cool.

"Stone offers a sensual pleasure," says Morange. And if the kids have to leave their Razor scooters at the front door, it's a small price to pay.

The Womb bathtub is an original design by LivinStone owner Olivier Morange. The standard version is 3 inches thick throughout and made from Portuguese limestone with dimensions of 75" x 51" x 19", but custom sizes and materials are available.

PRICE: \$28,000

CONTACT: LivinStone, 937 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310) 659-0600; Livinstoneusa.com



The Concrete Nour double vanity sink, designed by James DeWulf, sits on a black walnut stand. A removable divider shelf made from the same wood conceals the drain.

Standard size is 65" x 19" x 33", but custom sizes are available. Six color choices, including light green, brown, smoke and adobe.

PRICE: \$5,000

CONTACT: DeWulf Concrete, 4506 W. Jefferson Blvd., (323) 735-4445, Dwconcrete.com



DeWulf's dining table with stainless steel legs is available in sizes up to 92" x 44". Concrete comes in the same color choices as the sink.

PRICE: \$6,000

CONTACT: DeWulf Concrete



SHOP

Give yourself

By HELAINE OLEN

Plastic purveyors say they're out to make sure you get more than you give this holiday season.

With 42,000 points on the Diners Club International Carte Blanche MasterCard, you can race a stock car on a speedway. And if you can't find a reward you like, a spokeswoman says, 50,000 points earns you the right to make one up.

"Just call customer service, tell them what you want and they will price it in points within two business days — as long as it has a dollar pricetag to it," says Sunny Ricks. That makes peace on earth a no-go, but Ricks says the plan has paid for orthodontia and Botox injections.

American Express launched the In:LA card this September as a way to connect young Hollywood with rewards at what it deems "some of the most hip and fashionable L.A. venues."

There's a rewards plan for the American Express Centurion (aka "the black card"), but it seems almost redundant. With application by invite only, the card itself is positioned as a reward. The benefits are many: automatic airline upgrades, priority alteration service at boutiques and a personal concierge to do your Christmas shopping.

"[Companies] want you to feel the card has cache and status, but it is often just another way of reeling in consumers," says Derek Douglas, associate director of economic policy at the Center for American Progress. And unless you pay your bill in full every month, high interest rates will ensure your "gift" costs more than it's worth.

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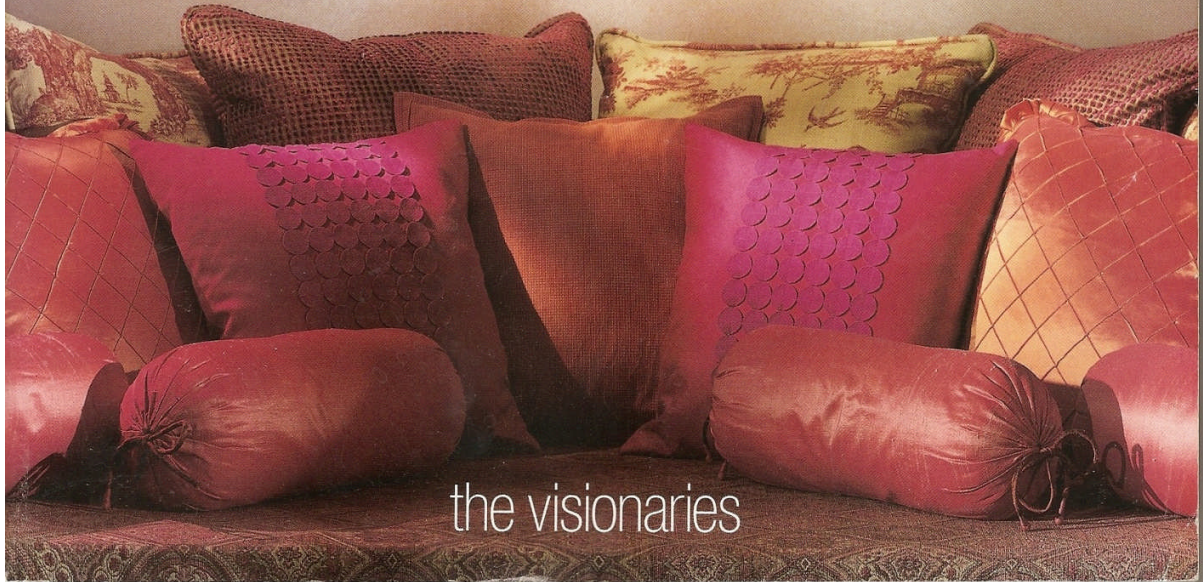
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On Everyone's Wish

INTERIOR DESIGN

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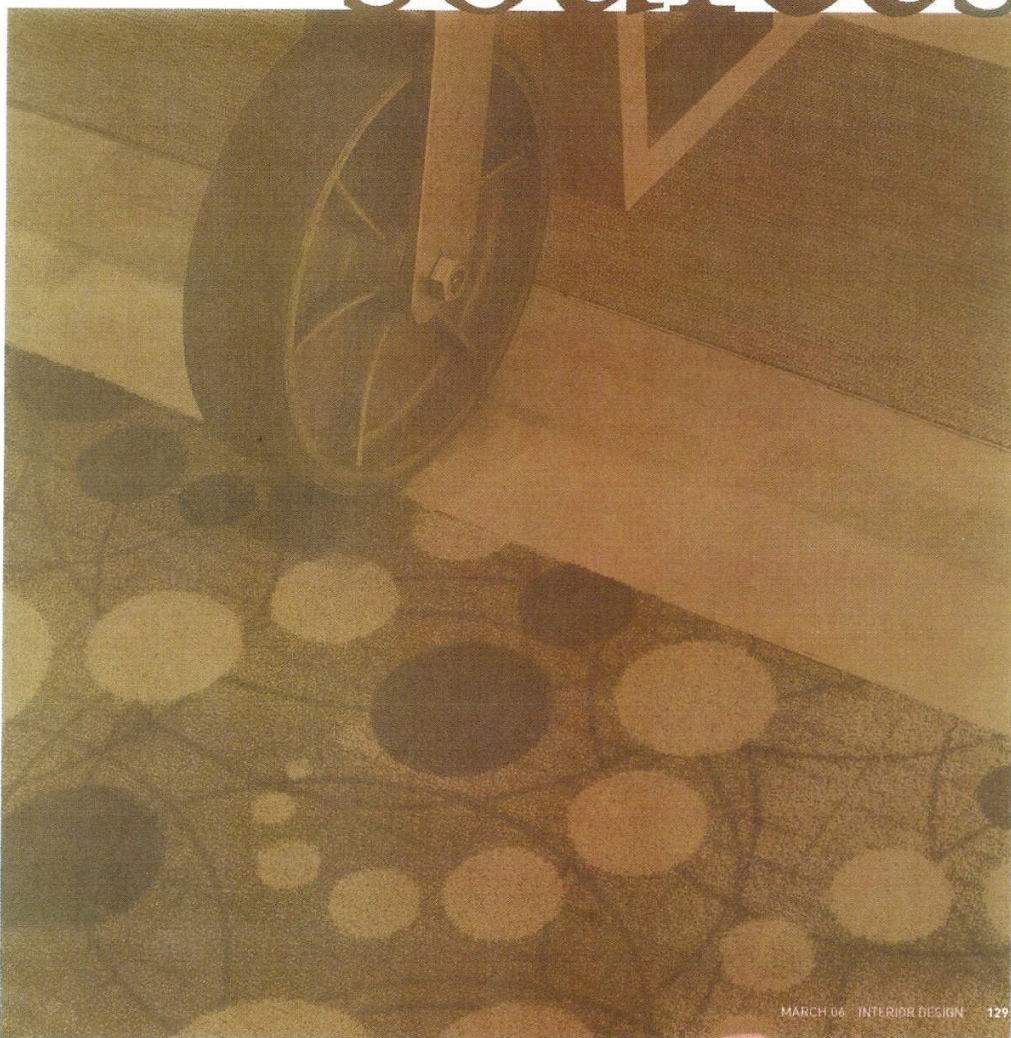


the visionaries

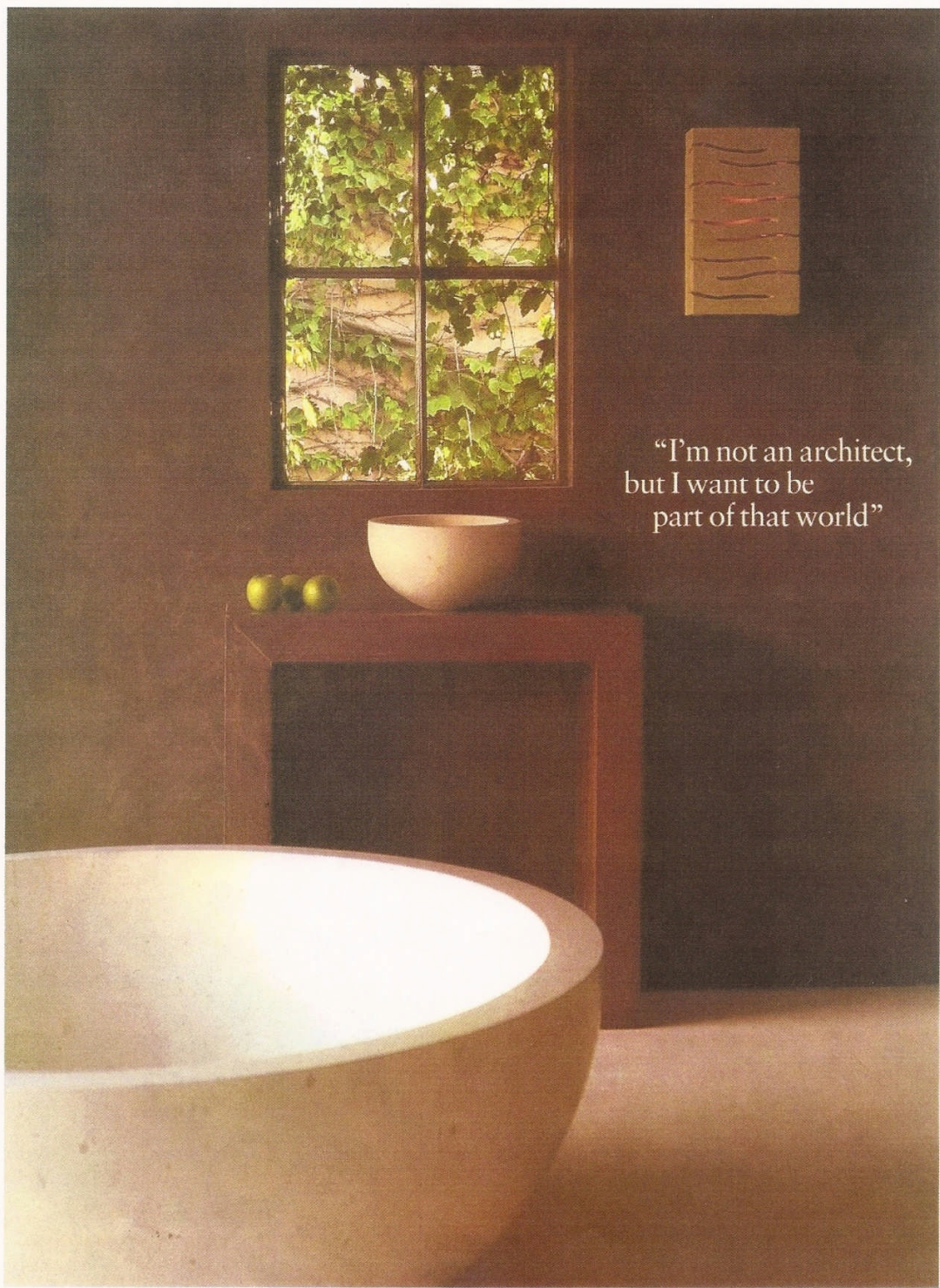


Deep down, designers are shoppers—
these new showrooms deliver the
goods, in spaces as gorgeous as the
products on display

SOURCES



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“I’m not an architect,
but I want to be
part of that world”



livin' large

IT MAY BE BETTER TO BE LUCKY THAN smart—but LivinStone co-owner and designer Olivier Morange is both. Lucky in that he happened to catch sight of the "For Rent" sign on a 1926 building in Los Angeles one night when he was driving to the airport, not thinking specifically about his ongoing search for showroom space. Smart in that he'd spent the past 20 years traveling, "renovating things," as he describes it, and learning about materials. "I'm not an architect," says the self-taught interior designer. "But I want to be part of that world."

Both the location of the building and its 4,000-square-foot size were ideal for the massive stone furniture and bath fixtures that

Morange planned to show there, alongside stone samples from round the world. And that wasn't all. After canceling his flight and signing a lease, he was lucky again. While gutting the dark interior, he and his wife and business partner, Anne Marteville, found 15 windows that had been blacked out and a bow-truss structure that was hidden behind three dropped ceiling heights.

Once everything was stripped down, Morange added very little. Limestone has replaced linoleum

flooring, and a Venetian plaster wall divides the front showroom from a 1,500-square-foot rear art gallery. Outside, Morange tended the sparse greenery climbing the facade until leaves all but enveloped it. Instant charm.

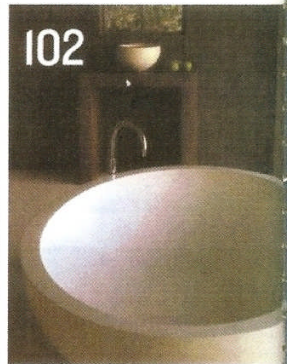
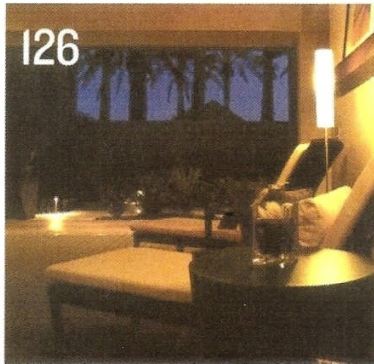
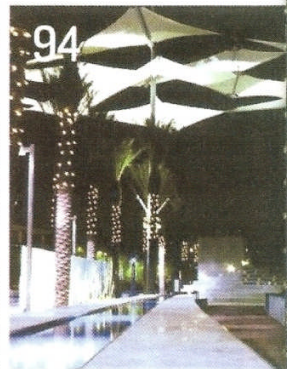
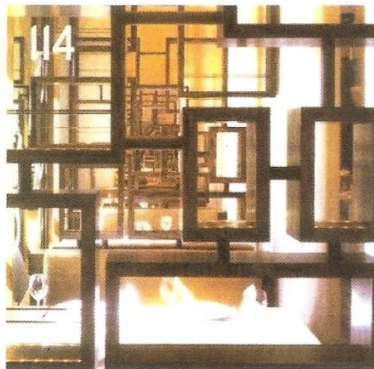
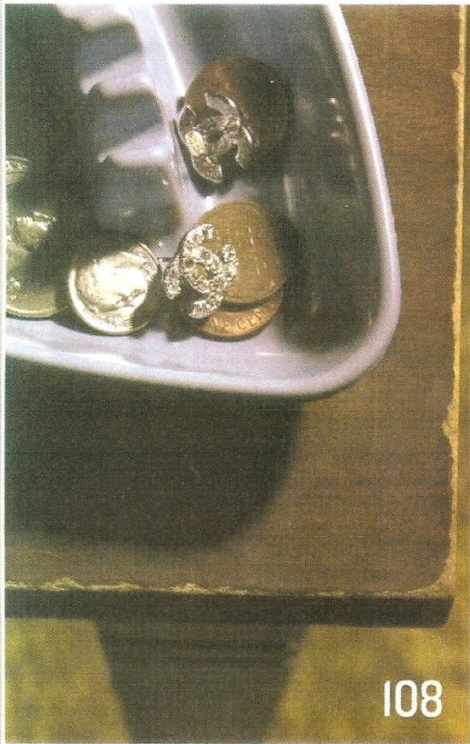
Products, designed by Morange and others, show off the power of stone—whether it's his ovoid bathtub of 3-inch-thick Capri limestone or a limestone sconce by Fernando Perrone. Stone dominates the interior, too: not only the floor but also part of the cash-wrap desk and the surround of the Zen garden at the center of the showroom. The garden's fountain gurgles amid a selection of bromeliads and succulents, the interior's real livin' components. —*Edie Cohen*

BATH TUB, SCONCE, SINKS, FOUNTAIN, TABLES, MIRROR, BENCH: LIVINSTONE. SINK FITTINGS, TUB FITTINGS: DORNBRACHT. FLOOR LAMP: PENDANT FIXTURES: CELINE WRIGHT. TABLE LAMPS: FESTA & CO. GRAPHICS CONSULTANT: CHRISTINE DRAIN-ENGMAN. LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT: TROPICS. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: PROFESSIONAL HOME.

Opposite: At LivinStone in Los Angeles, a newly uncovered window anchors an all-limestone vignette composed of owner-designer Olivier Morange's Womb bathtub and Vanity sink as well as Fernando Perrone's Musk sconce.

From top: Morange put in a walkway of Brazilian slate. A polished-chrome sink fitting is paired with a limestone basin by Morange. The cash-wrap desk's limestone slabs frame oak panels; opposite sits a vintage Pierre Cardin chrome-framed chair that Morange refashioned with a cord seat.





Desert Living

[FEATURES]

94 Experience Art Our photographers interpret the Mesa Arts Center and the architects respond

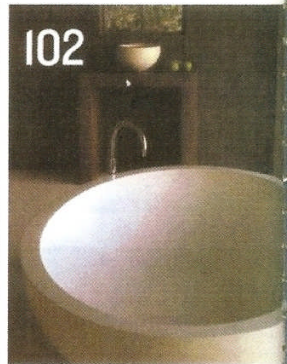
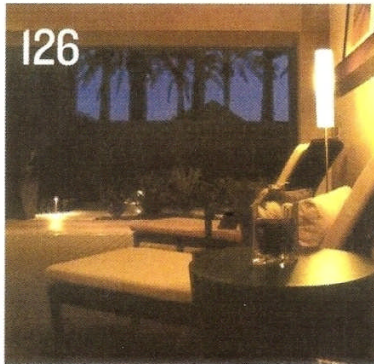
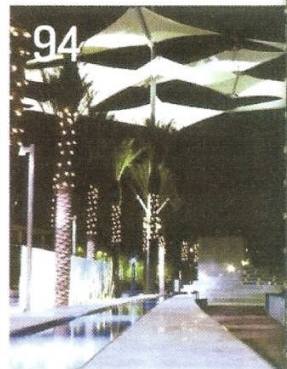
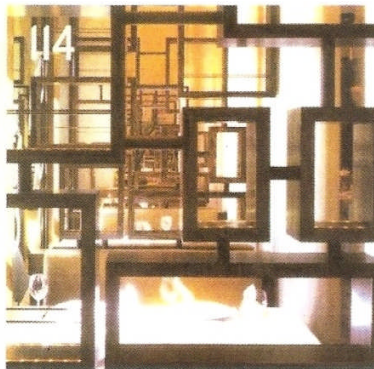
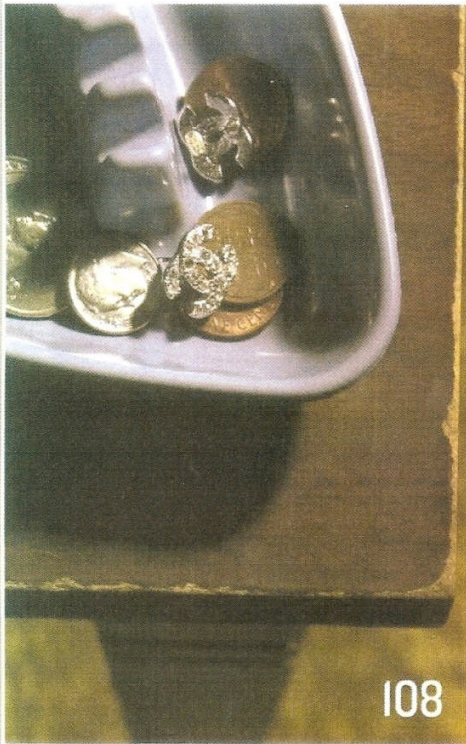
102 CA Boom! The design explosion hits California with a bang at this third-year show

108 Left Behind We can't believe someone left home without these stylish accessories

114 Vegas Design DL sits down with designers Adam Tihany and Tony Chi to chat about design in Sin City

122 Love Me Two Times The Hotel Valley Ho is officially re-open for business

126 Time to Relax Time rules the new Spa Avania at The Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch



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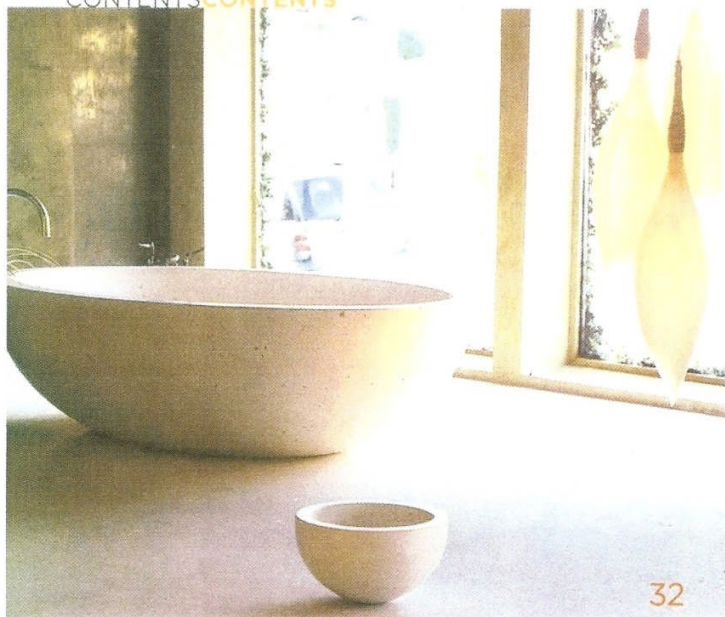
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CONTENTS CONTENTS



32



35

COLUMNS

20 FOUNDER'S LETTER

22 EDITOR'S LETTER

24 LETTERS

28 CONTRIBUTORS

31 TRUE WEST

Pucci goes West, Clodagh's magic carpets, Antoine Prouix in Phoenix, Dallas blooms and more!

41 MATERIAL CULTURE

Unfurling spring's new fabrics
photography by Gregory Cannon

47 GARDENS

Pameia Burton on cultivating
landscapes and balance

55 DESIGN

At home with Jiun Ho
in San Francisco
interior design by Jiun Ho
photography by Alec Hemer
text by Chase Reynolds Ewald

63 PRODUCT

Garden accessories we dig

69 SPECIAL SECTION
GREAT BATH DESIGNS

Five unique spaces redefine
the private realm

81 BOOK

Big Sky Cooking
by Meredith Brokaw and Ellen Wright
Foreword by Tom Brokaw

89 STREETWISE

San Francisco's new shopping beat
photography by César Rubio
text by Amanda Dameron

101 THE LIST 2006

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176 RESOURCES

Everything you need to know about
what's featured in this issue

178 POINTS WEST

photograph by Lisa Eisner

above left: LivinStone opens in Los Angeles.
See page 32. above right: An arrangement
from Dallas's Avant Garden. See page 35.

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MAY/JUNE 2006 THIRD ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

AND DESIGN

SPECIAL SECTION
INNOVATIVE
BATH DESIGNS

SMART GARDEN IDEAS
NEW SPRING FABRICS
THE BROKAW'S IN MONTANA

THE LIST!
YOUR GUIDE TO
192

TOP DESIGNERS
ARCHITECTS
LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS



Desert Living

LIVINSTONE

LivinStone's organic, minimalist limestone and slate furniture suits both indoor and outdoor applications. Their LA workshop acts as a gallery for artisan products by other designers and a vast reference library of stone samples for custom orders. The concept centers around bringing the beauty, elegance, and tranquility of nature into the home and work environments with natural materials such as travertine, onyx, wood, glass, metal, and shell – all designed with clean and simple lines. "Minimalist designs don't have to be cold," says Olivier Morange, proprietor and principal designer (pictured at left). "My designs create a relaxing environment. They help you feel the world outside ... I believe organic forms

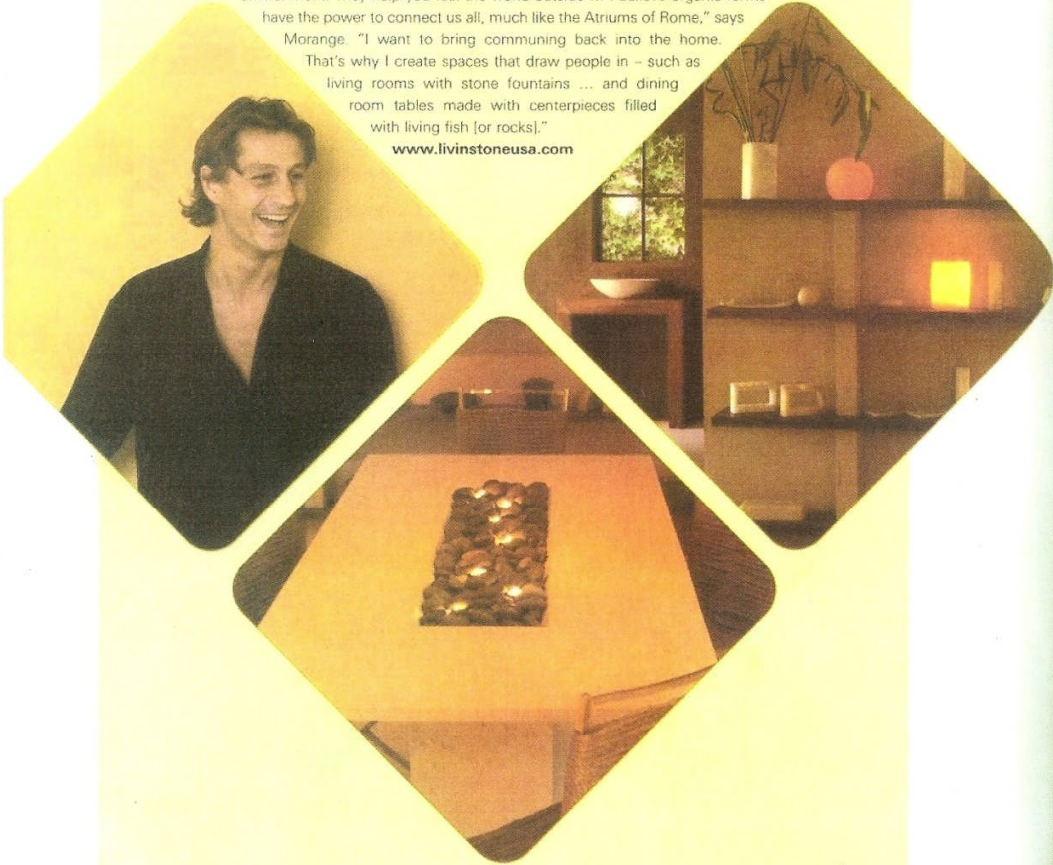
have the power to connect us all, much like the Atriums of Rome," says

Morange. "I want to bring communing back into the home.

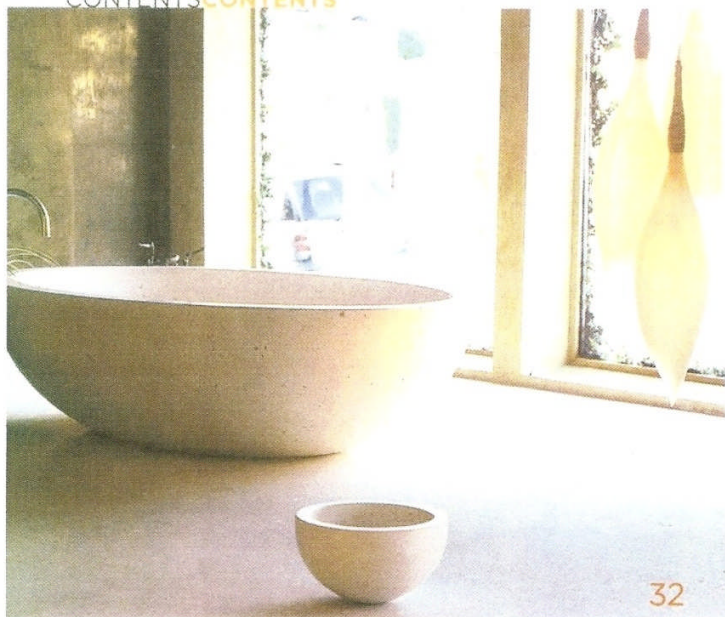
That's why I create spaces that draw people in – such as living rooms with stone fountains ... and dining room tables made with centerpieces filled with living fish [or rocks]."

www.livinstoneusa.com

3



CONTENTS CONTENTS



32



35

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20 FOUNDER'S LETTER

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