

Citizens

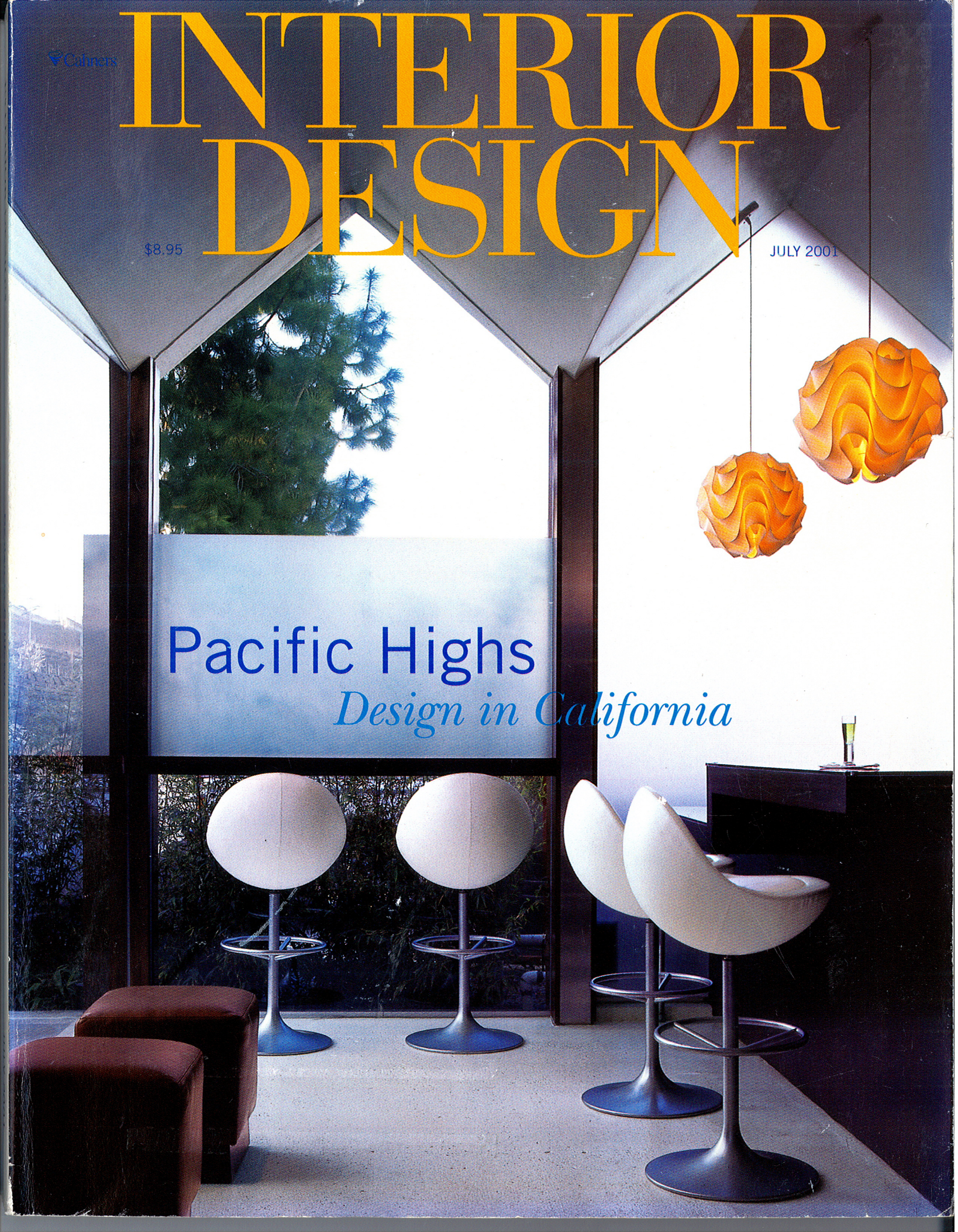
INTERIOR DESIGN

\$8.95

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Pacific Highs

Design in California



Artful Living

A passion for fine art informs Thomas Lavin's new Los Angeles showroom.



THOMAS LAVIN IS LIVING his dream—to offer a unique vision of design that combines the traditional and the contemporary into a seamless whole. He describes his West Hollywood showroom as a transitional environment, an exemplar of his personal philosophy: “You can play up the most contemporary or the most antique and always make exquisite sense.”

Lavin, who gained experience working for other showrooms, envisioned his space as a way to integrate his past in order to carve out his future. “I wanted to merge my art his →

Above: A quirky mix combines a Gary Hutton sofa, chair, and bronze side table with a John Protomaster coffee table, a chest from Orb World Antiques, a black wooden-framed chair by Frank Petronio, and Salgado Saucier lamps.

Right: Artwork by Frank Troia flanks furniture and accessories by Wendell Castle, with Maxine Snyder's settee and a metal chandelier by Ferr-eia to complete the look.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DOUGLAS HILL

tory, sales, and design backgrounds," he says, and the means by which he accomplished that goal reflect his belief in the link between art and design. The space is organized in a series of vignettes built from a foundation of antique carpets layered with modern furniture and vintage accessories. Eclectic styles play off rich woods and sumptuous fabrics. To Lavin, the showroom itself is an evolving work of art; he periodically redesigns the entire floor using new furniture lines as compositional elements.

The showroom also doubles as an art gallery and offers fine art consultation services. Lavin collaborates with art historian and curator Joanna Burke to mount exhibitions ranging from baroque to contemporary. In July, Burke launches an exhibition of vintage Russian photography in conjunction with the L.A.-based G. Ray Hawkins Gallery. More than just a showroom, Lavin's space is a forum for the city's art and design communities to commingle, as in his March bash introducing Lulu de Kwiatkowski's latest line of fabrics.

To create an interior that didn't compete with the products on display, Lavin worked with Swiss architect Christian Schnyder to keep things simple. The space, originally an office, was first stripped bare to reveal its elemental framework. The designers then instilled an industrial feel by maintaining the existing 15-ft. ceilings and installing sealed concrete floors. The original walls were covered with a rough-plaster cloud motif, while the 8-ft. partitions defining the vignettes were finished with a sampling of fresh hues from the Donald Kaufman paint collection, which Lavin carries in the showroom.

Lavin and Schnyder have plans to build on the showroom's success; aspiring to create drama through contrast, they are expanding the entryway into a low-ceilinged, 1,500-sq.-ft. open area that will serve as a portal to the larger showroom space. —Yasmin Spiro

Above: An antique rug, chairs from Chaise Ancienne, pieces from Orb World Antiques, and works by Frank Troia create this cozy scene.

Right: Kusakabe Kimbei's hand-tinted vintage photos accentuate a table by Koch Smith, pieces from Evan Lewis, and unique lighting from Marc Corbin.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: MIKE HARVEY.

