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SPRING 2008 \$5.95

# EDITOR'S NOTE

SPRING 2008



MEGHAN McEWEN EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Forget spring cleaning. In my book, there's nothing more gratifying than a good design purge: all that stuff that we don't need but feel compelled to buy (this year's embarrassing example: hand-carved wooden antlers I promptly returned). Every spring, I gather piles of stuff for a summer garage sale. Ideally, it's an annual ritual that encourages more thoughtful consumption on my part: buying things with meaning that I'll cherish for years to come, while searching out

new, interesting perspectives within my existing framework of stuff. I rearrange the furniture and dream up new vignettes: the unbelievably cool felted wool lamp by Tom Dixon I couldn't resist next to a wooden stump I found on the street and a hand-sewn piece of folk art I've had for years. I hope these won't be next year's stoop sale items.

My new role models for this brand of enduring style are Alan and Sherry Koppel, whose fascinating, art-filled home is featured in this issue (page 92). Catalysts for creative innovation in the city for decades, the Koppels' deeply personal collection of art and design, assembled over more than 35 years, is no less relevant today—and there's a story behind every piece they own. When it comes to authenticity and vision, they are the real deal.

Our city's up-and-comers are equally decisive, proving true the age-old maxim that good design is not about following rules. It's about following your gut. Take it from Lukas Machnik, who dropped out of design school to become one of our city's freshest talents at only 28 years old. Or Jonathan Nesci, the self-taught designer who drove a forklift before creating his breakout line of powder-coated steel furniture. And, of course, there's Tom Roszak, the local architect who won the national AIA award for Interior Architecture this year—the design equivalent of an Oscar. His modular glass masterpiece is his very own family dream home (see page 90). There's only one drawback: with all that glorious transparency, spring cleaning is not optional. Some rules aren't meant to be broken. [MMCEWEN@MODERNLUXURY.COM](mailto:MMCEWEN@MODERNLUXURY.COM)

# HOME FRONT STYLE

BY MEGHAN McEWEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOB COSCARELLI



From top: Lukas Machnik in his apartment. Le Chaise by Charles Eames. *Visionaire* magazine.

## REBEL, REBEL!

*A feisty minimalist with infinite chops, designer Lukas Machnik rewrites the rulebook on bad-boy design*

Polish-born Lukas Machnik didn't make it very far in design school. Far too audacious for the conventional path, this design-school drop-out is paving his own way in Chicago one über-minimalist project at a time ([www.lmid.us](http://www.lmid.us)). This summer, he opens a brand-new kitchen and design showroom in Lakeview. Between cerebral-chic residential projects and far-flung commercial gigs, hard-partying and international jet-setting, this busy wunderkind squeezes in a kicky Q&A. Designophiles, take note.

**PATH TO CHICAGO:** Born in Poland. Stint in London, then New York, then Chicago, because Chicago is synonymous with 1950s chic. I basically moved here because of Mies van der Rohe and the Bauhaus movement. **DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:** I'm a minimalist. **WHY SCHOOL IS OVER-RATED:** Those that can't do teach. [laughs] They try to mold you. If you don't have a talent, no one can teach you. Everyone has their own way. **HARD AND FAST RULES:** Hide everything. Put fantastic things out, everything else away. Comfort is not an issue. Looks first, comfort second. **REFUSE TO:** Sit on a big, poufy couch. **FAVORITE PIECE OF FURNITURE:** Le Chaise by Charles Eames. I read in it constantly. It's a sculpture. Very minimal, but very comfortable. **BIGGEST PEEVE:** People don't look beyond minimalism. The design is based on our body. We need to get past the idea that minimal design is not comfortable. The technology of the design is based on the shape of our bodies. **OBSESSIONS:** Chairs and lamps. And anything black right now. **NEXT BIG PURCHASE:** Vintage '70s Bond-style toy car. Small and fast. **WHAT DO YOU COLLECT?** CONTINUED...

...CONTINUED Shoes. I collect everything that catches my eye. Unordinary things. You get boring if you collect just one thing. **PERSONAL STYLE:** Euro? No, "The new dandy." **FAVORITE SMALL INDULGENCE:** Sunglasses. You can never have enough. Right now I'm wearing Dolce & Gabbana aviators. **CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT:** *Visionaire*—the limited-edition magazines of designers and photographers. The first one was curated by Tom Ford and very hard to get. It's worth about \$50,000. They're not even books; they're objects that you open. **PRIZED POSSESSIONS:** Fortuny lamp and my Gold D&G 24K gold-embroidered cowboy shirt. It was a fortune. I used to be so into fashion. **FAVORITE STORES:** I love Scout for found objects and the ingenuity. It's always changing and it's fun. And Archival. **FAVORITE LINES:** Like everyone, I love Moooi, because it showcases young talent. It's a collaboration. I love Marcel Wanders' "City System" storage/cabinet, and "Boutique" sofa collection. **BEST DRINKING GLASS:** Madrid Double Old-Fashioned by CB2 **ACCESSORY:** Bowls and objects made out of wood by Lars Zech. **LATEST TRAVEL:** Asia. **TRAVEL TIP:** Osaka on garbage pick-up day, because they throw away the best stuff. They have no attachment to possessions, and they throw away beautiful things and get all new. **DESIGN SUPERHERO:** John Pawson. He's the most genius minimalist designer and architect. **WHY MINIMALISM?** Clarity of space. I feel like I can breathe. Anything you put in a minimal space becomes more special. **SIGNATURE:** Mixing different moods or things. Monochromatic repetition, a chain of reactions. I like to mix things you would never think go together. **UP NEXT:** I'm working on my new showroom. I'll carry costume furniture and a new kitchen line that I designed. It will be like an office—or my brain—that's open to the public. I want to invite people into my space and show them a way of living. **YOUR NEW LINE OF KITCHEN CABINETS:** I do it constantly with other companies, and I wanted something that wasn't exuberantly expensive. I got frustrated looking at the poorly designed cabinets that come in every condo in the city at that medium-range price. I think about those important little design details, like handles that are inset. Kitchen cabinets are always designed in a box, with overhanging cabinets everywhere. You should use the bottom cabinets to full capacity, using every inch of your space and hiding it. You can have a couple open cabinets on top, but edit. Display only the things you use in your life every day. **WHAT INSPIRES YOU?** New York. It's the gateway to the world. **FAVORITE RESTAURANT:** Blackbird for its unapologetically clean lines. Whenever Donnie [Madia] puts an artist in the restaurant, it's fantastic. And the food presentation is just as minimal. **FURNITURE YOU HATE:** Sectionals. I don't like clunky big furniture anymore. It's all about thinner furniture with slender lines right now. In a sectional, everyone is sitting in a big square. With more seating, you can create separate spaces for entertaining and conversing with different points of view. **WHAT TREND IS OVER?** Lemme pick up a *Domino* magazine and I'll have the answer for you in five minutes. **WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING?** I'm always working. That's the curse. I walk into a space, and I think about how to design it. ■



**HOT GOODS!** From left: Machnik's 24K gold-embroidered D&G cowboy shirt. Lounge Gun Floor Lamp by Philippe Starck for Flos next to a painting of the Virgin Mary.

