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20 YEARS OF DAZZLING DESIGN

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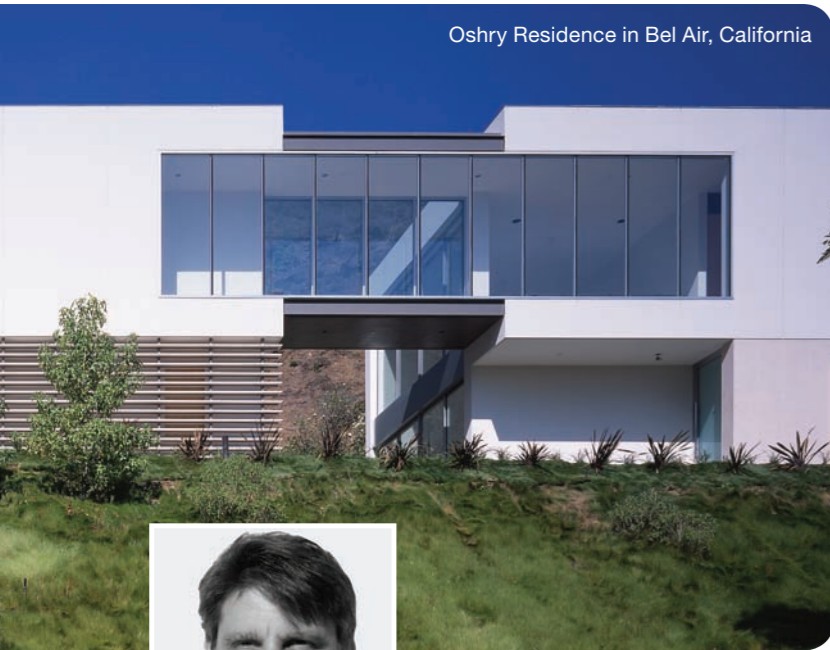
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DIALOGUES ON DESIGN

If the influence of design is worldwide, then no designer is an island. Designers of all types depend on the exchange of ideas and images to develop new forms and enhance pre-existing ones. **Zoltan E. Pali**, founder and design principal of the Los Angeles based SPF:architects, and **Freeman Thomas**, design director of the Strategic Concepts Group for Ford Motor Company, are two such visionaries. Bringing them together for an exclusive discussion, the following *Dialogue on Design* demonstrates how crucial and effective discourse is to the vitality of design, while also offering a glimpse into the thought process of these creative leaders.



Oshry Residence in Bel Air, California



ZOLTAN E. PALI

“EVER SINCE THE AGE OF SIX, I WANTED TO BE AN ARCHITECT AND NOTHING ELSE.”

• THE COURSE OF DESIGN

Pali: When first tackling a project, I go to my workstation at 5 a.m. and weekends when no one is around. I sit there and stare at a blank paper for hours, and then I do a bunch of research.

Thomas: I do some research too. For instance, if it's for a specific design on the interior, I may go to specific furniture stores, or start looking at different types of architecture to gain inspiration. I also brainstorm with my team. Discussion and debate are at the center of all great design.

Pali: I agree. From start to finish, I love all stages of the creative process—from the beginning of the design to the model-making, and on to the end of construction.

Thomas: I also have three favorite points in a design. The first is coming up with the magic sketch. The second is building up the actual technical packaging, the problem-solving aspect of the design. And my final favorite part is when I get to experience the finished product firsthand.



Rendering of residence, Zoltan Pali and SPF:architects

• WAXING TECHNOLOGICAL

Pali: In my designs, form always follows function, whether it be technological, ecological, etc. A building's form is partly determined by its surroundings and climate, and at times responds to the urban fabric it will become a part of.

Thomas: On the other hand, I find that sometimes function follows form. I'm especially excited about advances in the instrument panel of a car, and creating a platform that seamlessly adapts all electronics and technology so that they're handy and safe to use in a driving environment.

Pali: In my work, I like to incorporate sustainable technologies and materials like solar panels, wind power, recycled flooring, reclaimed wood, rapid renewable resources, etc.

Thomas: Yes, that's important—new technologies and materials that are premium, sustainable, and able to be recycled. Because we all want to be an example of responsibility.

FREEMAN THOMAS
“DISCUSSION AND DEBATE ARE AT THE CENTER OF ALL GREAT DESIGN.”



• DRIVEN BY DESIGN

Thomas: I discovered I wanted to become a designer when I was 21 and majoring in German at California State University. I read about this school and how you actually got a degree for drawing cars. That really sparked my interest because I had been designing cars as far back as I could remember!

Pali: Ever since the age of six, I wanted to be an architect and nothing else.

Thomas: I love architecture, and I think that had I not gone to design school, I would have gone to architecture school. Although when I went to design school, I did learn the basics of architecture and the basics of product design.

Pali: I wonder if there are similarities between designing a modern building and a luxury vehicle. The approach is different—one is designed for a large mass of people, the other is for an individual or two, or a single family. But again, I never designed a car before, only a perfume bottle, and I have to say it was a totally different design process.

Thomas: If I could design for another industry, I would like to create set designs for the entertainment industry, especially futuristic films.

Pali: Taking your statement one step further, I would like to design space stations.



Dashboard of the Lincoln MKT



MOD: Matters on Design, sponsored by the 2010 Lincoln MKT, will explore the world of design and reveal some of its most creative forces at The Grove in Los Angeles on **Saturday, September 26, 2009**.

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