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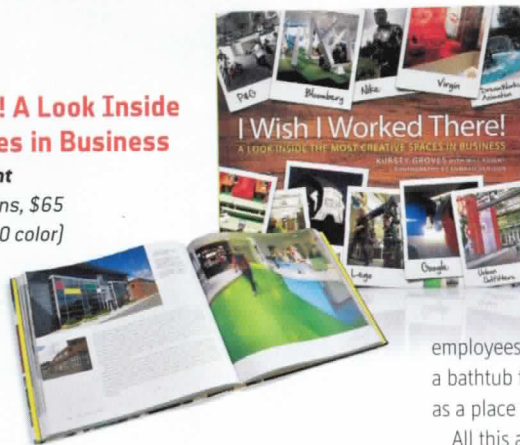
I Wish I Worked There! A Look Inside the Most Creative Spaces in Business

by **Kursty Groves** with **Will Knight**
 Chichester, U.K.: John Wiley & Sons, \$65
 256 pages, 421 illustrations (400 color)

This jolly, interesting survey covers 20 unconventional offices. Some are British, some American, with projects from Switzerland and Denmark thrown in for good measure.

Some are for clients we'd expect to be seriously corporate: Johnson & Johnson, Proctor & Gamble. Most are for companies known for their inventiveness: DreamWorks, Google, Lego, Walt Disney Imagineering. In her introduction, design consultant Kursty Groves, who operates under the name Creative Spaces Consultancy, posits that those creative spaces share four attributes. First is *stimulation*, exemplified in the book by interiors for Urban Outfitters fashion, designed by Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, and Oakley sunglasses, designed by that company's architect CEO. Second, *reflection* is illustrated by P&G design manager Jason Shaw's nap pods. *Collaboration*, the third, is seen in MoreySmith's café for Sony Music and Jump Studios's development kitchen for Innocent Drinks. Nike's sports and leisure facilities, designed in-house, and Sussman/Prejza's "fun lab" for Hasbro represent the fourth, *play*.

Her introduction ends with the encouragement, "Have fun!" And we do—



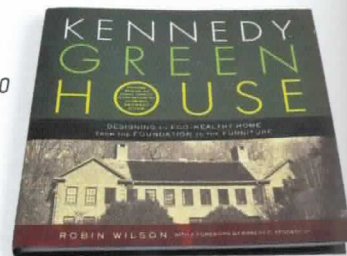
throughout chapters with headings such as "Cheeky Little Touches," "Fluidity," "Open, No Boundaries," "Kids at Heart," and "Intense Artisan Process Sustained by Forced Relaxation." We see firemen's poles and slides rather than stairs and mismatched chairs supplanting uniform sets (Camezind Evolution for Google). Astro-Turf stands in for nylon carpet (Jump Studios for Innocent Drinks). Brightly colored exercise balls roll around among the worktables (Sussman/Prejza for Hasbro). Back-painted glass encourages employees to write on it (PDM International for Philips Design). At Google again, a bathtub filled with foam blocks, positioned to face an aquarium, is described as a place to "chillax."

All this adds up to a good look at a design attitude that's undeniably valid, perhaps even increasingly valid. (The photography, contributed by Edward Denison, is appropriately lively and full of personality though often underlit.) But we can't help adding the caveat that, despite the role of such Dionysian romps, there will always be a place for the more Apollonian qualities of order and quiet.

Kennedy Green House

by **Robin Wilson**
 Austin, Texas: Greenleaf Book Group Press, \$30
 187 pages, 231 illustrations (223 color)

Robert Kennedy, Jr., lives with his family in a 90-year-old house in Mount Kisco, New York. The house suffered flooding in 2003,



Architect & Design | Rafael Novoa Interior Design Photo | Jeffrey Apoian



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and that disaster led to an even more serious one, black mold. "We fought a two-year losing battle against the creeping fungus," Kennedy writes in this book's

foreword, before realizing that the "only solution was to raze and rebuild." As a professional environmental advocate and professor of environmental litigation at Pace Law School, he naturally intended his new house to be green. With the help of Robin Wilson Home's Robin Wilson, whom the foreword calls "an eco-friendly design pioneer," that goal was accomplished in spades.

This book chronicles the practices and processes that created a remarkable residence and presents the story in great detail, with equally great common sense. We are told of organizations such as the Forest Stewardship Council and programs such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star. We encounter hypoallergenic bamboo flooring, low-VOC paint and stain, dual-flush toilets for reduced water use, geothermal pumps, photovoltaic roof shingles, mirrored skylights for passive lighting in corridors and closets, and much more. Not one of these is unfamiliar to today's design profession, but seeing them all come together in a single house for a notable family gives them a sense of immediate reality they often lack. A resource guide at the back lists phone numbers and Web sites for 99 sources of materials, products, and information.

RIGHT: MICHAEL VAHRENWALD

What They're Reading...

Michael Meredith
Principal of MOS



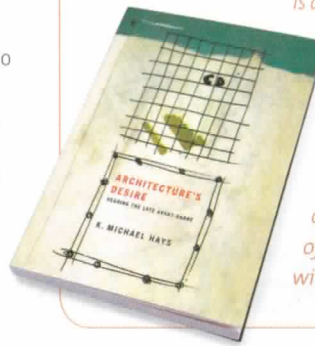
Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde

by K. Michael Hays

Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, \$20
192 pages, 41 illustrations (7 color)

When designers think green, they mostly focus on preservation and sustainable manufacturing. Theory, some have noticed, gets a little lost in the process. "How architecture is evaluated still needs to be questioned," architect Michael Meredith says. To make sense of the new, he's turned to K. Michael Hays's examination of 1970's experimental building and its attempt to push the technical and aesthetic boundaries of the time. "The avant-garde's role is always to challenge the status quo and produce new

possibilities," Meredith says. Plus, theoretical knowledge helps practitioners slog through the mire. "How do you distinguish a building by Zaha Hadid from a building that looks like a building by Zaha Hadid? How do we produce meaning and cultural value in the context of commerce?" he asks. His own efforts in that arena include a prototype for an off-the-grid modular house that breaks new ground without looking for glory. —Deborah Wilk



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