

A GUIDE TO  
HOME, FAMILY,  
AND COMMUNITY.

# Home front

## Vanishing minorities

In business, newsrooms, and the entertainment field, minorities still lag behind whites.

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## Papa's taste

Ernest Hemingway lived, wrote, and ate with gusto. A recent cookbook chronicles his palate.

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## Neighbor to Neighbor

By April Austin

### The comfort zone

Modern design is easy on the eyes, but it can be torture on the body.

Think of the stiff, high-backed chairs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh or the leather club chair of Marcel Breuer. Great design statements. Tough on the backside.

Like the futuristic houses featured in the cover story at right, modern designs have a habit of trickling down into the mass market, but not without some tweaking. You may never see a home with curtains for walls, but the principle of flexible space may someday affect how developers build houses in your neighborhood.

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The same holds true for home furnishings. Witness the success of Crate & Barrel, IKEA, and Pottery Barn. By offering European designs at mass-market prices, these companies have not only prospered, but have also educated consumers and whetted the appetite for better design.

But mass-market modernism walks a fine line between style and comfort. It's clear that people still hanker for coziness. An example is played out on the TV sitcom "Frasier." The penthouse apartment that Frasier Crane shares with his dad is trendy and elegant, with one exception. To protest the lack of comfortable chairs, the elder Mr. Crane keeps a plaid upholstered recliner in the living room. It's the only place he'll sit.

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To many people, modernism fails to appeal because it looks so uncomfortable. And uncompromising. Modernism allows no clutter — at least not as pictured in glossy shelter magazines.

And a house without clutter is simply too difficult for most of us to imagine.

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# The way we'll live

By Carol Strickland  
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

NEW YORK

The private house, emblem of the American dream, may be in for some big changes if recent designs by star architects are any indication.

Examples of high-end houses are currently on display in an exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art. The 26 designs offer glimpses into how the wealthy live. But do these dream houses have anything to do with reality?

Comparing ideas from the most elevated corner of the architectural universe, represented in the exhibition, with opinions from a sampling of down-to-earth architects yields some new ideas.

A legitimate question is whether houses built by signature architects are, as Terence Riley, chief curator of architecture and design at the museum, asserts, "a collective bellwether of the current state of architecture and a harbinger of its future direction."

Architectural historian Witold Rybczynski, professor of urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, is skeptical about the influence of high-end houses on lowbrow residences. "Few innovations pioneered by high-profile architects actually trickle down to the mainstream," he says. "Some of Frank Lloyd Wright's innovations, like the masonry fireplace and carport, have filtered down. But it's rare that signature architects influence mass-market housing."

See DESIGN page 14

High-tech architects create futuristic home designs for their wealthy clients. But will the rest of us feel at home with them?



COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

**THE DIGITAL HOUSE:** In this computer-generated image, architects Gisue and Mojgan Hariri envision a house consisting of a central core with various prefabricated 'plug-in' elements to be added and exchanged as a family's needs change.