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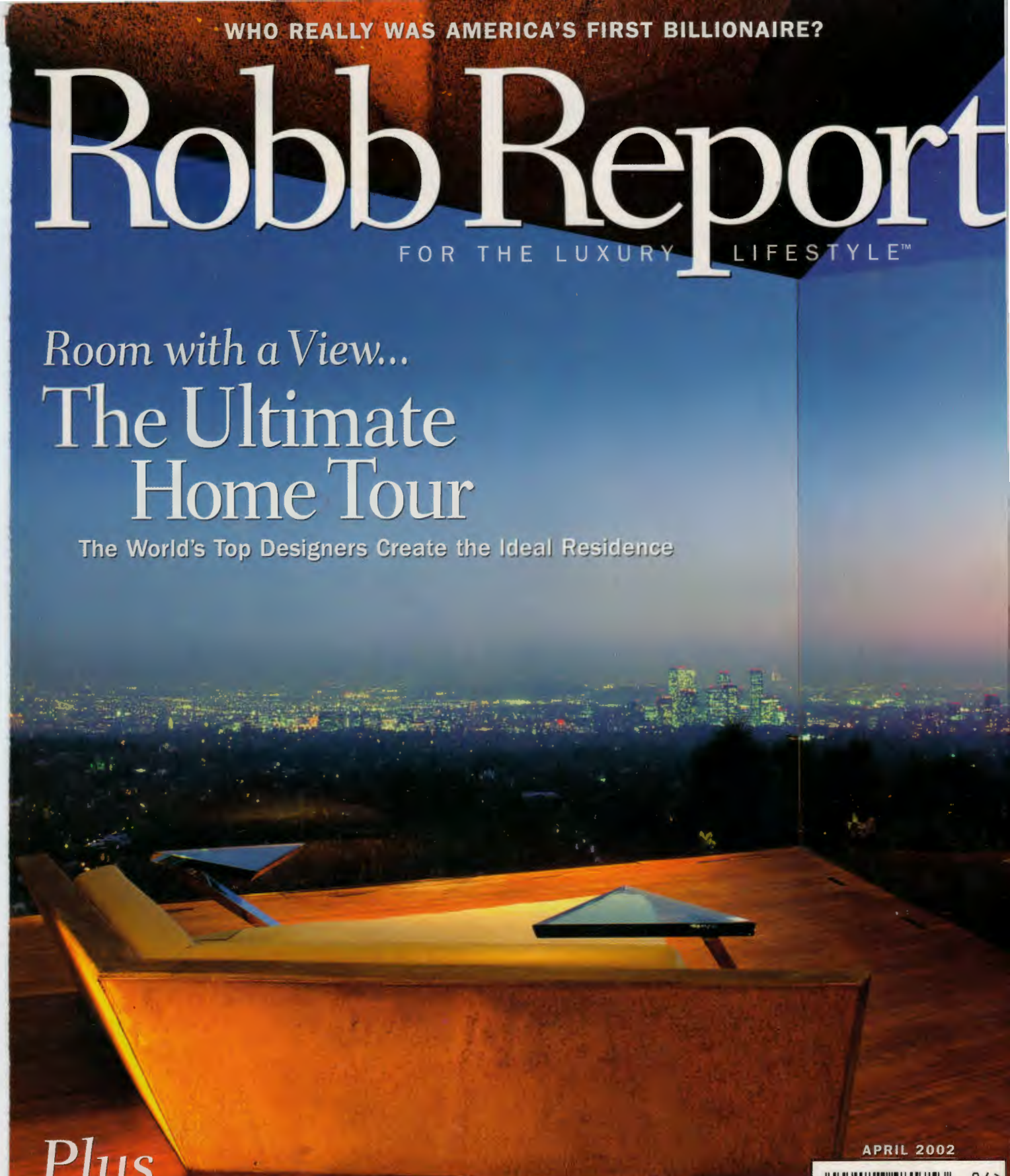

Room with a View...

The Ultimate Home Tour

The World's Top Designers Create the Ideal Residence

Plus

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Robb Report

APRIL 2002, VOLUME XXVI, NUMBER 4

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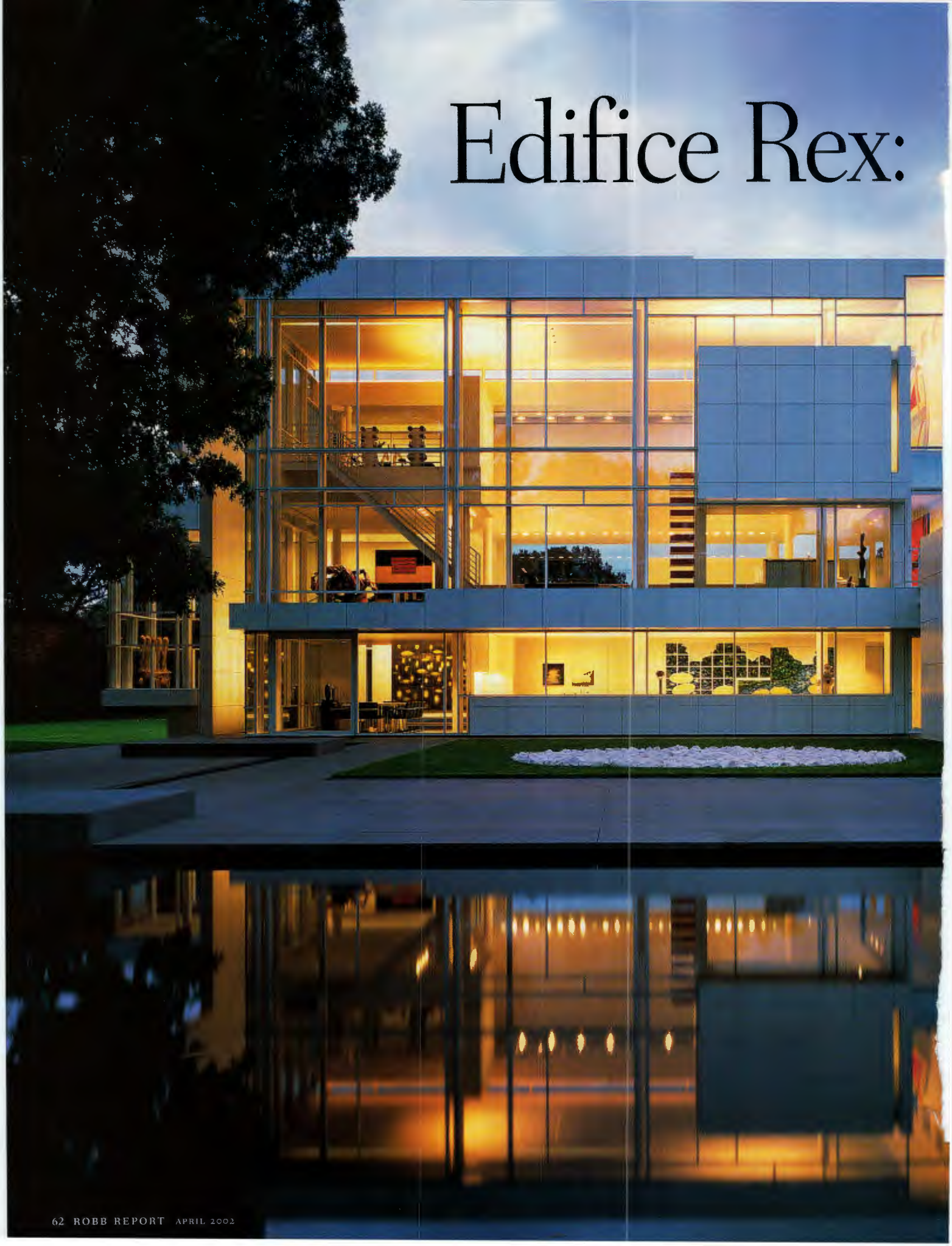
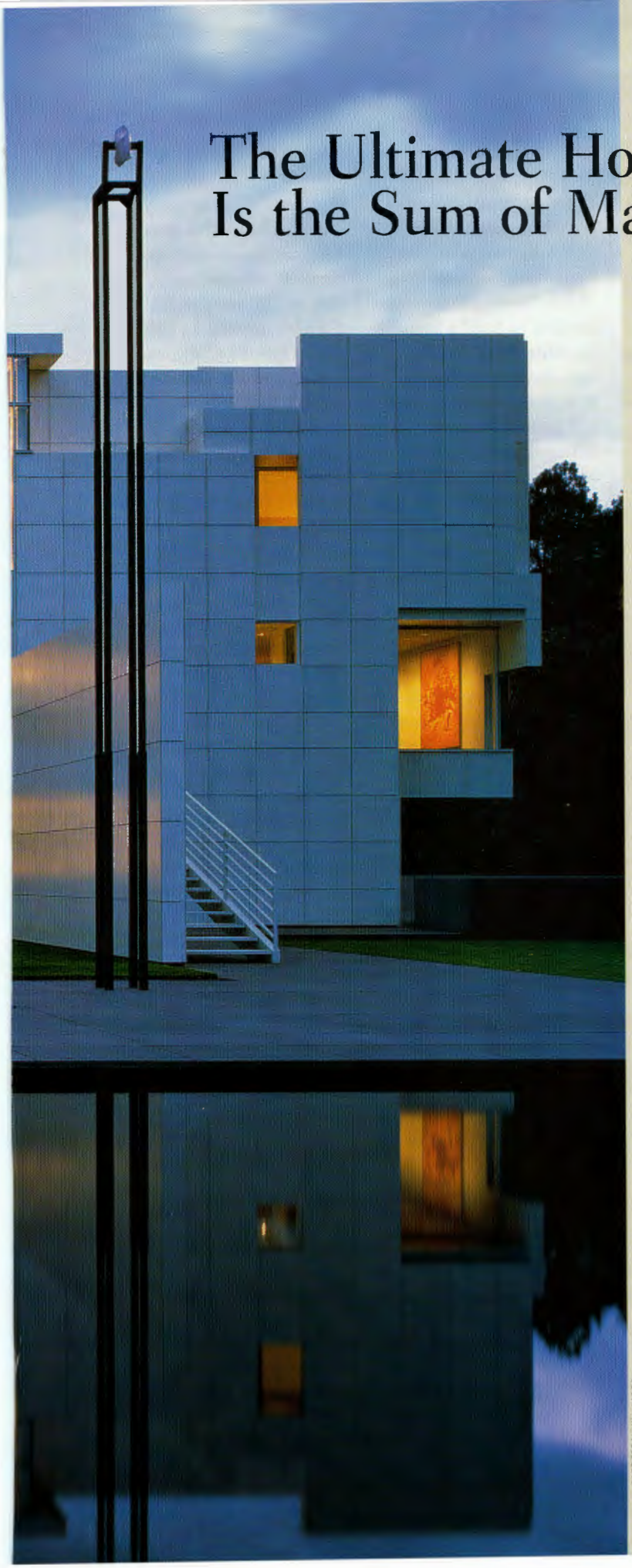
FROM LEFT: MARY E. NICHOLS; JOHN & JEANNINE HENEBRY

Edifice Rex:



The Ultimate Home Is the Sum of Many Parts



SCOTT FRANCES/ESTO

When we set out to bring you the ultimate house tour, we didn't realize that our ideal residence would actually be 11 different homes.

When we speak of home, we speak as much of a state of mind as of a structure. Each home you own serves a different purpose in your life. When you need a jolt of energy, you tap into the pulse of the city. To unwind, you drive to your beach house down the coast. In your more expansive moods, you head for your country house to entertain. And when you crave some nighttime stargazing, you fly to your mountain lodge.

Because we understand that each of your homes corresponds to distinct aspects of your own personality, your

shifting moods, we approached the task of assembling the *Robb Report* 2002 Ultimate Home Tour as a fluid sequence of contrasting architectural and interior types. A composite of various residences—some old, some new—our annual home tour encompasses the full spectrum of styles: traditional, contemporary, formal, state of the art, and cutting edge.

Our methodology in gathering the rooms that follow reflects the spirit in which modern tastemakers create environments for themselves. We invited a select group of architects and interior designers to each submit one extraordinary room; from these, we constructed our own ideal edifice, choosing each interior to be included in the issue according to its role in the lifestyle of the inhabitants and how readily the design solution serves that role. We wanted to demonstrate the various

Facade

FIRST IMPRESSIONS mean *everything*, especially in Dallas, a town with a reputation for one-upmanship. When Howard Rachofsky decided to build a house, he went straight to the top—he hired architect Richard Meier, who was still immersed in the construction of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. "It's a wonderful site," says Meier. "On one side is a creek, which is large enough that it looks like a lake." Initial plans called for several bedrooms, but as the concept developed and needs changed, public spaces took precedence. "Howard wanted a house with fewer bedrooms and more space for his art, because he has a growing collection...and a very good one," Meier says.

The exterior's uncluttered geometry of glass and white aluminum panels is a Meier trademark. Clearly articulated interior spaces visible through the massive glass windows augment the home's air of elegant sophistication. "I endlessly contemplate the extraordinary properties of the house," says Rachofsky, "its ingenious spaces, its surprisingly sensible scale and charm, its mutability, and its perfect way of 'breathing' light." A house that inspires endless contemplation is in itself a work of art.

Richard Meier, 212.967.6060

Foyer

A GRAND, triple-height entrance hall with a gracefully curving staircase sets the stage for grand entrances. The entry of Iris Cantor's mansion La Belle Vie in Bel-Air, Calif., centers around a 40-foot-high rotunda that is at once majestic and intimate. "It is a palatial space, but it's still quiet," says New York interior designer Bebe Winkler, who worked on the residence for five years. "Nothing jumps out and says, 'Look at me.' In design I always aim for understated elegance." With that philosophy in mind, she and Cantor scuttled original plans to clad the entire space, from floor to ceiling, in marble. Instead, they chose a floor of inlaid marble and used plaster paneling, painted pale cream, for the walls. Ten oval windows in the domed ceiling suffuse the hall with light and illuminate *The Hand of God*, one of many Rodin sculptures in the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor collection.

This backdrop allows the iron and gilt balustrade of the limestone staircase and the gilt bronze lantern to stand out. Winkler even had a model of the lantern, which is nearly 6 feet long, hoisted into place to ensure it wouldn't overwhelm the hall. "There are many simple elements that combine to make the entrance harmonious and peaceful."

Bebe Winkler, 212.308.5674

MARY E. NICHOLS

ways in which the artistic powers of the designers could be brought to bear in rendering spaces that adapt to—and underscore—the passions and pastimes of their clients, whether these be art collections, antiques, books, or wine. Where appropriate, these talents have also evoked atmospheres ranging from genial grandeur for entertaining or privacy for moments of quiet retreat.

We make no judgments with respect to style. Your taste may run to steel, glass, and right-angled modernism for the city and voluptuous Spanish Colonial or stately English for your country house; and we have acknowledged this sense of eclecticism in our tour. Our sole guiding principle is how successfully a room's form follows its function: Each space depicted—living room, dining room, kitchen, master bathroom, or even pool—represents the distillation of what that room should be.