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Inside T's Design Issue

CULTURE, DESIGN, FOOD, MEN'S FASHION, WOMEN'S FASHION
BY T MAGAZINE

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T's latest issue examines the current state of design by looking backward — namely, to the hedonistic '70s and oddly alluring po-mo '80s. The onetime California home of **Gerald and Betty Ford** is a perfect example of this revival; its new owners have kept many of the house's original charms (including a giant portrait of the former First Lady), while adding their own contemporary touches, to create a space that's anything but conservative.

Likewise, the purist Mark Haddawy — the co-founder of the retailer Resurrection Vintage and restorer of Modernist houses — has doubled down on his version of '70s California cool by doing very little to his own home in **Big Sur**. And the fashion reporter and insider **Mary Russell**, who for many years was as likely to cavort among (and occasionally hop in bed with) her stylish subjects as she was to photograph them, reminisces about Europe in the freewheeling '60s and '70s. Elsewhere, Nicola Del Roscio, the longtime close companion of **Cy Twombly**, remembers the late painter while creating his own Eden in the hills of Gaeta, Italy; **Sarah Lucas**, the former rude girl of British art, discusses how she grew up without losing her nerve; **Ricky Gervais and Zaha Hadid** say yes to sriracha-flavored ketchup and a floor-cleaning robot while lounging in a giant bird's nest; the New York magazine co-founder and "I Heart NY" creator **Milton Glaser** gets the By the Numbers treatment; and a handful of authors with new books out this year pay tribute to the spaces where they write. [See all stories from the issue >>](#)

EDITOR'S LETTER

Second Thoughts

DESIGN

BY DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN

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Karl Lagerfeld was among the first to embrace the emerging Memphis movement, and he did so wholeheartedly in his Monte Carlo penthouse in the early '80s. *Credit Jacques Schumacher*

One of the great pleasures of an interest in design is being converted to ideas you hadn't fully grasped or admired the first time around. The style I've always cringed at most — that of the international, postmodern Memphis group, which existed from 1981 to 1987 — now seems kind of appealing: cheerfully earnest and playfully rigorous. The current influence of Memphis, which is popping up everywhere all of a sudden, is to be found throughout these pages. So is the renewed taste for furniture and décor from the 1970s. We didn't intend to focus in this issue on previously disdained periods of design, but we did just that, and we feel really good about it.

Photo



Nicolas Ghesquière, Louis Vuitton's artistic director of women's wear, has been at the forefront of reviving design from the past in a modern way. Here, his Paris apartment with a 1980s console by the Memphis design group founder Ettore Sottsass, a pair of Memphis chairs from 1985 by the Japanese designer Shiro Kuramata and a delicate gilded mirror from the 1940s. *Credit Nicolas Ghesquière/The World of Interiors*

Seventies furniture — deep sectional sofas, velvety conversation pits, polished chrome and glass tables, shaggy carpets — had always seemed to ooze a self-satisfied infatuation with the benefits of the sexual revolution. From an aesthetic standpoint, that felt a little crass, a little vulgar. Which is precisely why it is appealing right now. A bit of **low-slung louche sexiness** from furniture is a welcome break from the clean lines and stiff forms of Modernism that we've become so used to.

Of course any decade in design encompasses many different strains, and doesn't really begin or end according to the calendar year. There is the sleek, mod '70s aesthetic from Europe, which followed the political upheavals of 1968; in the issue, **we showcase the work** of the brilliant designer Pierre Paulin, lately heralded by Louis Vuitton's artistic director Nicolas Ghesquière. (You can see how beautifully he incorporates Paulin's seating into his 18th-century Paris apartment **here**.)

There is also the free-form organic oeuvre that emerged from California. We feature **a glorious house in Big Sur**, crafted from the timber of an old bridge, as iconically 1970s as it is timelessly classic. As this style moved into the suburbs, things became a little glitzier, and in the **Rancho Mirage house** of Betty and Gerald Ford, California desert architecture got a dose of golf-course preppy chic. Even that is its own kind of fabulous.

But as we were putting this issue together, beginning to open our hearts to all this '70s stuff, the '80s kept rearing its manic head. Not the "Bonfire of the Vanities" brocaded '80s, but the giddy, deconstructed, too-many-colorful-toppings-on-the-ice-cream-cone '80s. If the '70s were a response to the schoolmarmishness of midcentury design utopians eager to share their vision with the tasteless masses, the postmodern Memphis movement was a fat thumb in the eye of aristocratic good taste. At T, that's the sort of renegade spirit we champion. (Ghesquière is exemplary at bringing this era, too, into his own home.)

Most great interiors include bits of the past. We rarely wholly reinvent our homes, but instead carry on, taking what we like, dropping what we don't and being introduced to new ideas — even ones from the past, seen again with a fresh eye.

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