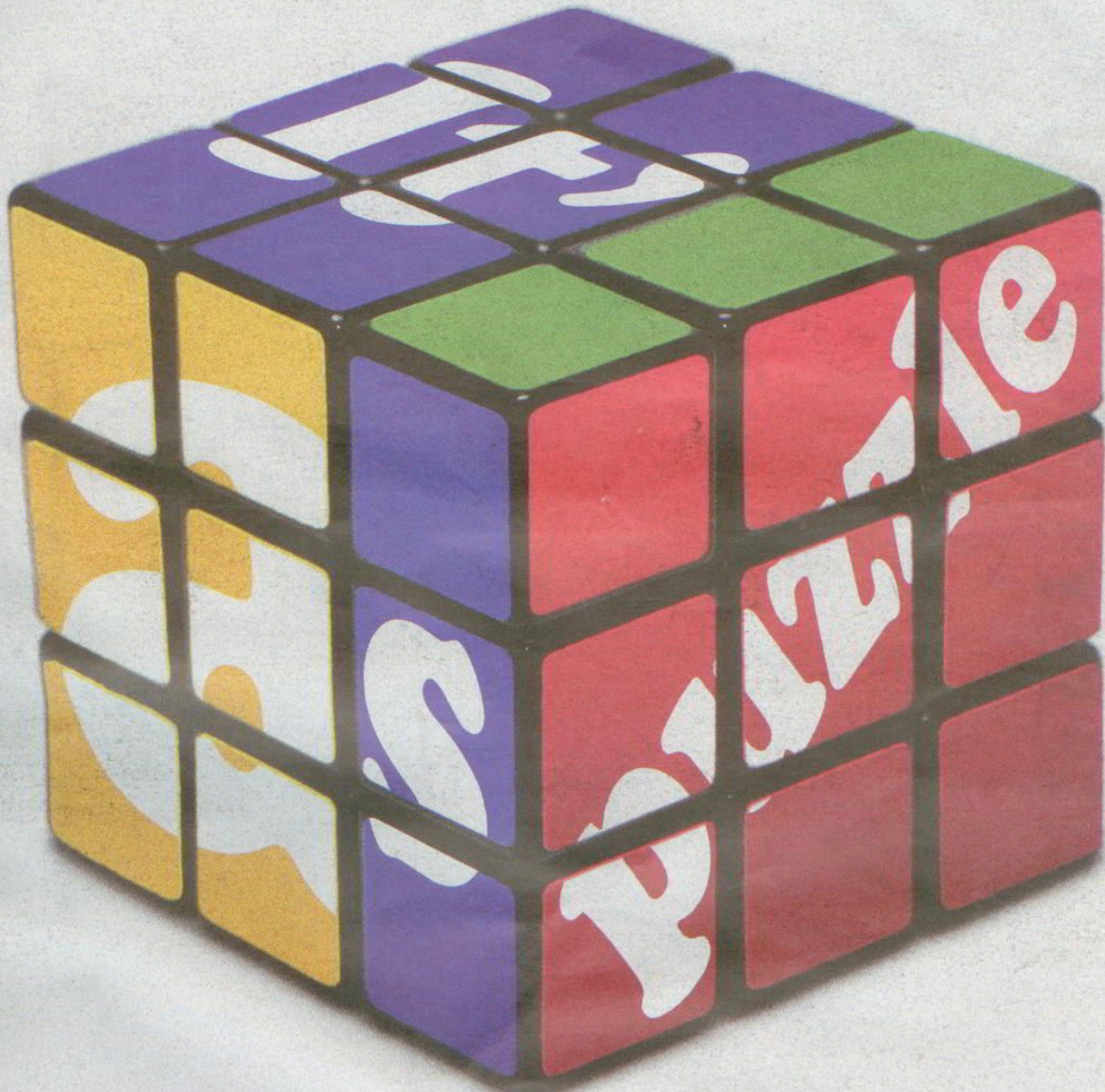


December 20, 2001

Postmagazine



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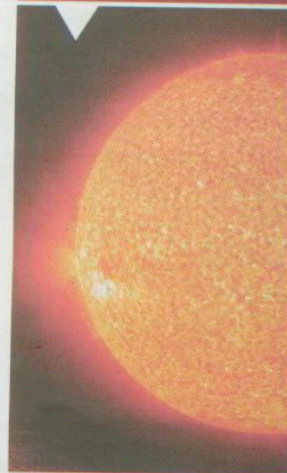
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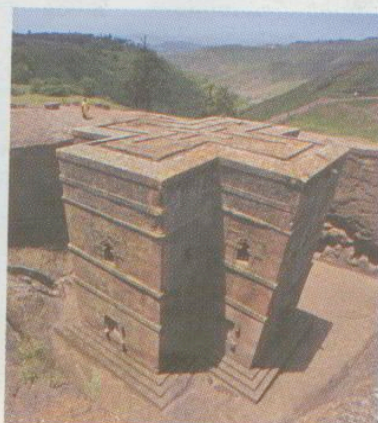
Today is the eve of the winter solstice, the longest day of the year. A solstice is an astronomical event that occurs twice a year when the Earth's axis is most inclined toward the sun. The name is derived from the Latin word *sol* (sun) and *sistere* (to stand still). At the winter solstices, the sun comes to a temporary halt in its direction. The degree of the sun's length of time skylight occurs below the horizon, otherwise

Box-office hit *Twilight* is a film adaptation of the novel of the same name by Stephenie Meyer. "The tale of a dark and brooding vampire who risks everything when she falls for a brooding vampire, it has been a visual and visceral triumph," *Romeo & Juliet* lists among her inspirations: rock bands Muse and Linkin Park, and Jane Austen ...

Austen was born in southern England. Critic Gary Kelly describes her as one of the few novelists in world literature as a 'classic' and yet is widely regarded as a 'classic' during her lifetime. One of her most famous is *Emma*, which got a big-screen adaptation with the title role going to Hollywood's Gwyneth Paltrow ...

Paltrow was the target of ridicule when she launched her lifestyle brand. Deriding the site's tagline, "no aspect", one critic said, "If you're looking for laughs, there's not really a lot to be had." The actress carries on with her currency, as noted by Estée Lauder's her the face of its Pleasures line.

Celebrity-endorsed perfumes in the multi-billion dollar industry, there being a vast market of wealthy but identity-conflicted consumers to pay homage to role models: Britney Spears and Hilary Duff. An obscure scents is "Cumming," released by Scottish actor Alan



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Space mission

Downsizing to a smaller home can require imagination. The designer's renovation of a Clear Water Bay flat made its family the perfect fit.

In Hong Kong, downsizing is often a necessity. Peter Solomon, however, chose to go smaller, after he and his family found a 1,500-sq-ft, five-storey house was too big. "Living on only two levels," he says. "If we had a roof and had to go to the kitchen to get something, it was a nightmare." To suit them better, they started a search for a new home in Hong Kong Island, to Kowloon where they started: Clear Water Bay. Solomon bought because, it was half the size of their house, on a hillside with breathtaking sea views and came with a pool. The Australian entrepreneur says was a result of his fondness for barbecues. After living in Hong Kong, Solomon had clear ideas about what

he wanted in his new home. But he was also willing to hand the renovation to a young architect who had just arrived in Hong Kong. "I've always been an advocate of giving young people who have great energy and ideas the opportunity to do things," he says, referring to Mitchel Squires, an architectural designer from Sydney.

Although Squires' dress style may be sequinned surfer chic (he enjoys riding the waves at Tai Long Wan), he had little trouble absorbing his client's aesthetic. "I love certain things and we trawled the stores in Happy Valley, Central and Wan Chai for four weekends so Mitch could feed off my likes and dislikes," says Solomon.

One item Solomon, his wife, Tenny, and Squires all gave the thumbs up to was a modern sculptural "chandelier", which sets the tone for the flat. There's much else for the eye to feast on apart from the impressive light fitting, including quirky furniture by Spanish designer

Jaime Hayon and art by Peter Max and Andy Warhol. The pièce de résistance, however, commands the entrance, where special lighting was installed to fall on a David Begbie steel mesh sculpture that features parts of a woman's body.

"One part of the brief was that I have a lot of art and we need space for it so we can't fill all the walls with cupboards," says Solomon.

Squires managed not only to accommodate his client's favourite pieces but also to build capacious storage space.

Although Solomon clearly played a commanding design role, his wife and their 13-year-old son, Matthew, a Hong Kong junior karting champion, also had a say.

"Peter's style had been dark colours and textures but this time his wife wanted it bright, white and light," says Squires.

She balked at a suggestion of Squires to introduce »



Space mission

Relocation to a smaller home can require imagination. The designer of one Clear Water Bay flat made its family the perfect fit.

When homeowners in Hong Kong downsize it's often because they have to. Peter Solomon, however, *chose* to move into somewhere smaller, after he and his family realised their 5,400 sq ft, five-storey house was too big.

"We ended up using only two levels," he says. "If we were entertaining on the roof and had to go to the kitchen it was three floors down; it was a nightmare."

Deciding a flat would suit them better, they started a search that took them to Hong Kong Island, to Kowloon and back to where they started: Clear Water Bay.

The apartment Solomon bought appealed because, among other things, it was half the size of their house, on one level, boasted breathtaking sea views and came with a balcony, which the Australian entrepreneur says was a must-have because of his fondness for barbecues.

Not surprisingly, having been involved in fashion and design for 30 years, Solomon had clear ideas about what

he wanted in his new home. But he was also willing to hand the renovation to a young architect who had just arrived in Hong Kong. "I've always been an advocate of giving young people who have great energy and ideas the opportunity to do things," he says, referring to Mitchel Squires, an architectural designer from Sydney.

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She balked at a suggestion of Squires to introduce >>



Text Charmaine Chan
 Pictures Jonathan Wong
 Styling David Roden



nise the sea view from the living
 (sofa (HK\$45,000) and armchair
 re (shop F, 12 Blue Pool Road, Happy
 The floor lamp cost HK\$12,000 from
 building, 50 Wellington Street, Central,
 oring in this room came with the flat
 ne wash to clean the grout lines and

ure from Thames Gallery (tel: 44
 on, hangs in the entrance hall. The
 from Bals Tokyo (1/F, Elements, 1
 oon, tel: 2302 1961). The distressed
 ng cost HK\$50 a square foot from
 k Gay Mansion, 375 Lockhart Road,
 2).

i,320 each) from Zodiac Lighting
 n, 32 Morrison Hill Road, Wan Chai,
 te the kitchen, which was built for
 chen (311 Lockhart Road, tel: 2519
 ere acquired through Siemens (G/F,
 ddell Street, Central, tel: 2511 2323).



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ay to brew coffee
l'appetit magazine,
and planetgrec.com.

odum.com



contrast in the living room. But, Solomon remembers, "Mitch said, 'No, I'm going to install dark wood [bookshelves] to break up the wall. It wasn't until we put books in them that we fell in love with it.'"

Matthew's bedroom is now connected to the adjacent spare room, where his racing-car simulator is parked. "He's absolutely determined to be a Formula One driver," says Solomon, adding that his son also chose the position in the living room for his grand piano, which had to be brought into the flat by a specialist. The instrument sits in front of a study that Squires carved out of the overly large entrance hall (see *The good and the ugly*).

Despite having encountered problems that many who are new to Hong Kong experience, Squires is keen to take on more architectural design-related projects here. "A lot of times I ended up drawing on the walls because of the language barrier," he says, recalling how he used these sketches to get his point across. But in the end, says Solomon, "he pulled it all together [in just two months] and did a good job".

The family may still be getting used to more compact living but, says Solomon, "I really like the flat. I don't see myself moving in a hurry."



The good and the ugly



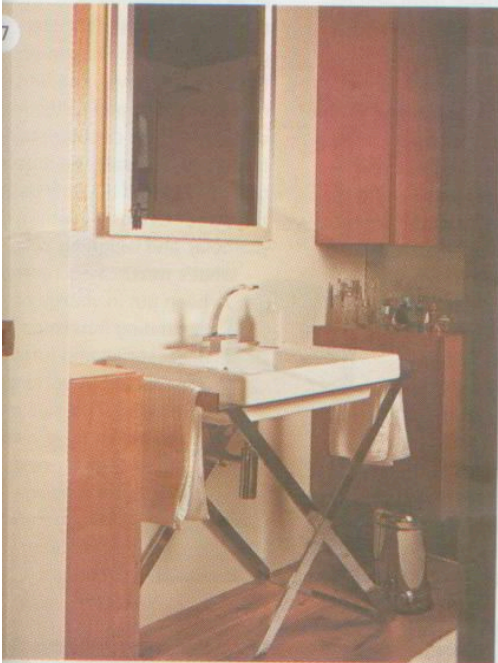
Good: To make the most of the "unbelievably big" entry hall, architectural designer Mitchel Squires built a small office for his client in one corner, leaving enough space for a roomy shoe cabinet and seating, and creating a blank wall opposite the front door on which the steel-mesh David Begbie sculpture hangs. Instead of building a basic box for the study, Squires designed a handsome window and glass door that give the impression of being one piece.

Bad: In the original layout, three bathrooms stood side by side along a corridor. One was turned into a store room and two were retained. Although the en-suite bathroom in the master bedroom was transformed to suit Peter Solomon's modern tastes, he chose not to rip out the new Italianate bathroom next door. It's a decision he regrets because the materials and classic design are not in keeping with the rest of the apartment.



Tried + tested

Plenty more in store "Storage, storage, storage": that was one request Peter Solomon made of his architectural designer, Mitchel Squires (tel: 6392 2497; e-mail: mitchel@mitchelsquires.com). The ample storage areas not only allow the focus to fall on the family's possessions but also enhance the feeling of spaciousness and add to the apartment's clean, modern aesthetic. That look was achieved in part by hiding the bar area (right) – complete with two wine fridges (HK\$21,800 each) from Siemens (G/F, Baskerville House, 13 Duddell Street, Central, tel: 2511 2323) – behind white sliding doors that match those installed elsewhere in the living areas. The other half of the bar contains the other wine fridge plus a built-in sink, wine-glass racks and bottle storage.



Picasso lithograph hangs over the bed, which was built by actor Visual Point Design. (7/F, Haribest Industrial Building, 1 Pui Wan Street, Fo Tan, tel: 2604 3277) for HK\$10,200, holding the headboard. The bedside tables are antiques acquired in Hong Kong. The Philippe Starck bedside lamp (HK\$5,000) came from The armchair cost HK\$40,000 from Lane Crawford Home (Pacific Place, Admiralty, tel: 2118 3668).

The spare room, which is connected to 13-year-old Matthew's room, is an LG simulator, which cost HK\$50,000 from Sideways Design Club (1 Chancery Lane, Central, tel: 2523 0983). The shelving cost HK\$10,000 and was built by Visual Point Design.

For the dining table (HK\$60,000 from Lane Crawford Home) hangs a sculptural chandelier (HK\$100,000) from Zodiac Lighting. The Philippe Starck Louis Ghost chairs cost HK\$3,500 from Kartell (1/F, Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell Street, tel: 2540 408). The Andy Warhol artwork came from the Gagosian Gallery (www.gagosian.com) in Beverly Hills, California, the United States.

The bathroom cabinets in the en-suite master bathroom were



**NAUGHTY
NIGHT
PUT THEM**

This year there's something for
Even the nau