

# residential architect

huntley wood

APRIL 2005

## architects' choice

experts point us to their favorite product picks



SURFACES

raising roofs // reinvention revisited /  
stones at glass houses // gilding the cage /  
welcome signs // frank lessons

www.residentialarchitect.com

## welcome signs

### log haven

When Jeff Kovel left his first job out of architecture school, at a firm that designed high-end log homes in Telluride, Colo., little did he know the log cabin motif would resurface later in his career. After nine years spent working on hip, contemporary residential and commercial projects, the Portland, Ore.-based architect designed Doug Fir, a restaurant, lounge, and music venue heavy on hunting-lodge imagery. "The primary move was to take the log cabin style and translate it into a modern, sophisticated way of detailing," he says.

He didn't have to work hard to convince his client. Kovel, AIA, owns Doug Fir himself, along with a couple of friends. The group saw potential in the dilapidated first floor and basement of a renovated Portland hotel, and once they came up with a name and concept the materials palette and design details came together. A tree farm in Canada supplied them with the 2,700 linear-foot of Douglas fir logs needed to clad the 9,000-square-foot interior. The glass and metal detailing provides a modern

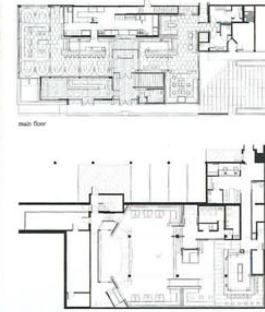
edge, while cultured stone and faux fur elements enhance the hearthside atmosphere. Salvaged building parts—including bar stools, honeycomb ceiling lighting, and the log slices that cover the downstairs bar—help the space to retain its retro feel. And the uneven textures of the wood help absorb excess sound during music performances, a trick that Kovel learned working on a home studio for singer Lenny Kravitz while with another firm. "The past and future collide in this project," the architect says. "We tried to create a sort of in-between vocabulary that wouldn't necessarily exist anywhere else." In other words, Doug Fir gives patrons exactly what they're looking for when they go out at night—a haven from the real world.

The imagery of Route 66 and Google coffee shops influenced Doug Fir's design. "We wanted to do a contemporary play on 1950s motifs," says architect Jeff Kovel of Skylab Design.



Skylab cleverly placed together glulam beams to form the mock hall-logs in the upstairs bar.

Basil Chikara



project: Doug Fir, Portland, Ore.  
architect: Skylab Design, Portland  
contractor: White Dog Construction, Portland  
project size: 9,000 square feet  
construction cost: Washed  
photos: Steve Cristofani, except where noted