

# surface

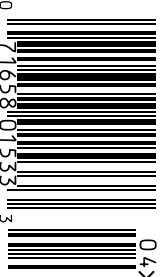
*Our Selection of  
Spring Looks*

*Bisazza Reveals  
Its Artistic Ambitions*

## *The* ENDORSEMENTS

*Design's leading voices praise  
a new generation of talents*

APRIL 2012  
DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 07





THIS HOUSE BOAT HAS FRESH SHEETS. A LONDON HOTEL @NEPT ANCHORS A SPARSE SUITE TO A SAFE HARBOR.



Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* begins with an English sailor cruising up the River Thames at sundown. Over a century later, the boat that traveled through Conrad's best-loved novel has fetched up again on the city's shoreline, this time as a habitable sculpture inspired by traditional Belgian-made steamboats. Located atop the landmark Southbank Center cultural complex, the installation, designed by architect David Kohn and called "A Room for London," is a project of Living Architecture, a non-profit co-founded by writer Alain de Botton that has enlisted noted architects to build six mini-retreats throughout the U.K., making them available to plucky weekenders for short-term rentals.

"When you're there, it feels like some kind of refuge, a respite from the city," says Kohn, who won the commission in collaboration with artist Fiona Banner. With the approach of London's 2012 Olympics, Kohn and his team reflected on the city's vexed history with the world at large, using Conrad's book as an incisive meditation. The rooftop riverboat is already booked through September at a going rate of \$475 for a single night's stay. Guests will enjoy modern amenities, plus views of what Conrad called the "vivid flush" of dusk.—I.V.



## PARISIAN LIGHT HELPS A BUILDING BLEND IN.

French architect Manuelle Gautrand is known for using splashy strokes of color, but for the 120-foot-wide facade of her latest project—Barclays Capital's eight-story French headquarters on the Avenue de Friedland—she stuck to a design that is "corporate and calm," she says. Inspired by the avenue's 19th-century buildings, many by Georges-Eugène Haussmann, Gautrand applied origami-like folds to glass-encased marble. "I like to work with folds," she says. "It can be inside the volume or the patterns or the graphic designs or partitions. In this project, I wanted to use folds because of the Haussmann buildings, which play, in a very beautiful way, with the sun and shadows." Also vital to the scheme: opening up views of the Arc de Triomphe and Eiffel Tower.—S.B.



## IF YOU CAN MAKE IT HERE... THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT GETS A DRY RUN IN INDIA.

Ultra Global PRT, the British firm that designed and manufactured Heathrow Terminal 5's elevated pod-car system, was recently contracted to design a robust network—the largest of its kind—to accommodate frequent crushes of Sikh pilgrims in Amritsar, a city in India of 1.5 million. "It'll be a quick, air-conditioned journey at the same price as a rickshaw ride, but at a fraction of the time the route normally takes," says Fraser Brown, the company's managing director. The tracks are scheduled to be raised this year.—Jonathan Schultz