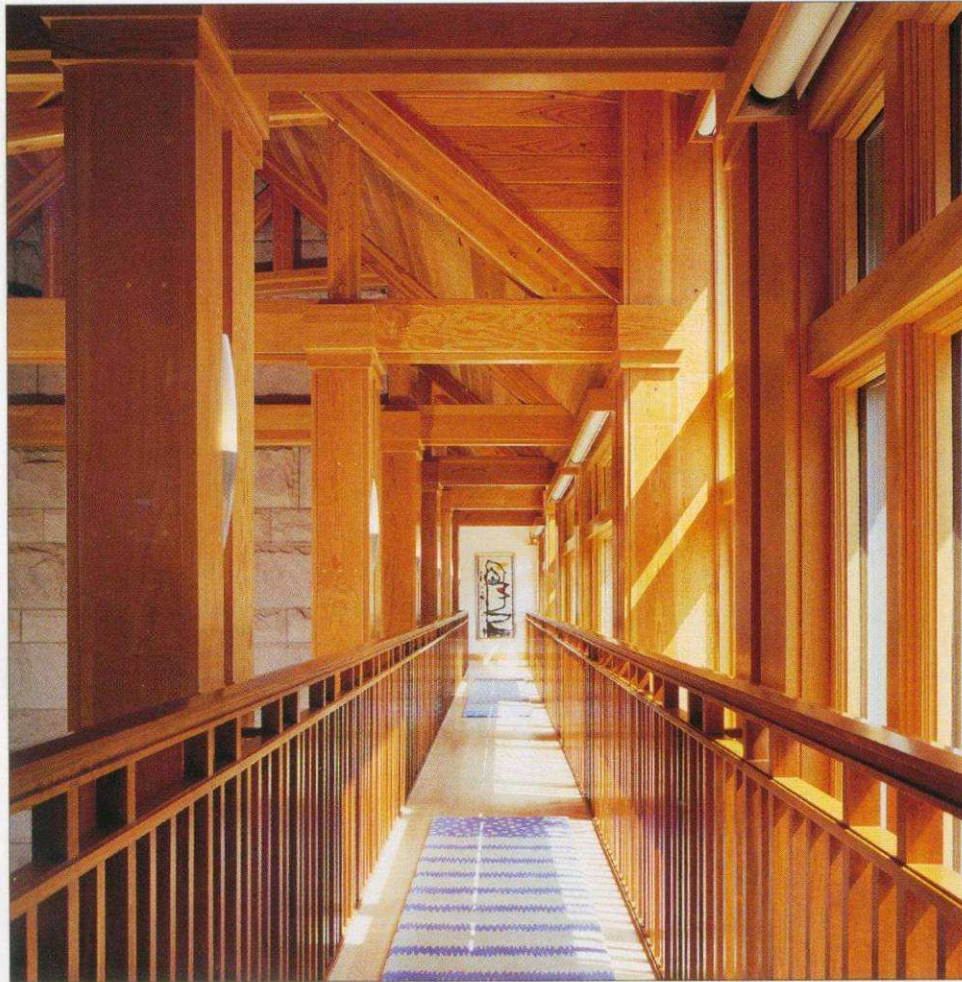


Linda Searl



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Architecture should be a direct result of the site and the client," Linda Searl says of her commonsense approach. But sometimes exceptions are necessary. Thirteen years ago, when Searl and her architect husband, Joe Valerio, were ready to build their own house, they chose "a marginal neighborhood in Chicago" for their "very contemporary house on a very visible corner." Their gamble paid off, and, looking back, she says, "We believe it helped turn around the neighborhood." Searl also took a gamble by deciding early on to enter the "almost-all-male profession" of architecture. In the fourth grade she knew she wanted to be an architect, but in high school she was swayed to attend a women's college. After "a disastrous first year," she returned to her early ambition. "It can't be any worse than this," she thought, and it wasn't. Searl now heads an 11-person firm in Chicago and is working locally on a 196-unit high-rise and converting an old bowling alley into a house.

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SCHEINER: BILLY CUNNINGHAM (PORTRAIT); SCOTT FRANCES (INTERIOR); SEARL: MATT WARGO (INTERIOR); RUSSELL INGRAM (PORTRAIT)