

VOGUE

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**SCARLETT
JOHANSSON**

**and fashion's
growing
conscience**

BEST BUY

**A smart
coat**

**The elite
chic of
Balenciaga**

**David
Hockney**

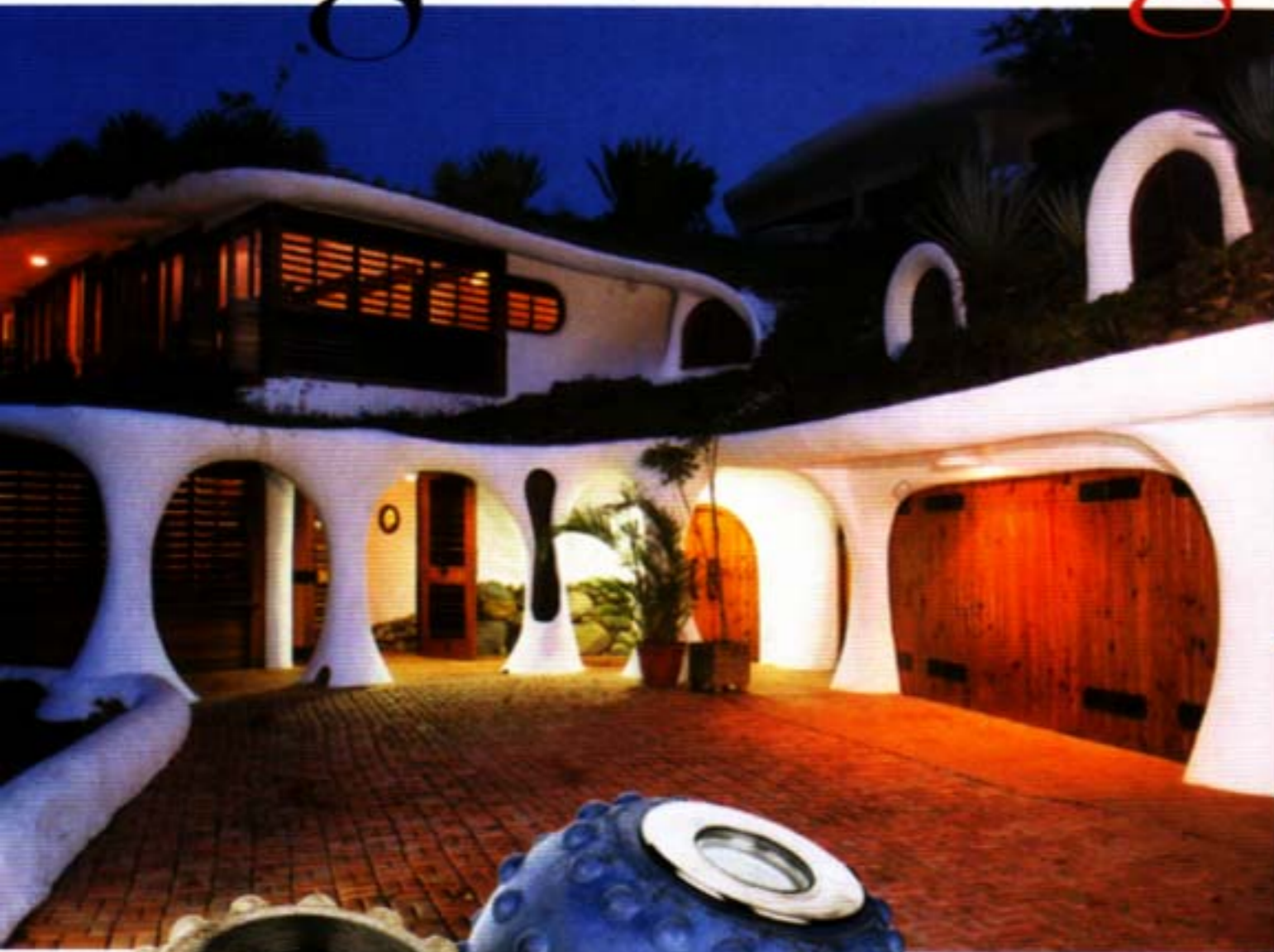
**A painter
returns home**

**The
return
of the
cocktail
dress**

**KINKY
SHOES**
**Fashion's
latest fetish**



vogue living



Clockwise from left, Mount Hartman Bay Estate; the Arthur Elrod House, made famous in *Diamonds Are Forever*; "Drift" bench, price on application, at Established & Sons



From top, "Lite Ball" lights, from £240 for three, at Conscious Forms. "Droplet" wallpanel, £895, at Petr Weigl. Candlestick, £39, at Caravan. Image taken from *Close Up* by Kelly Hoppen (Quadrille, £15)



lending warmth to the right setting.

The use of concrete inside gained popularity when minimalism became fashionable in the Nineties. Later, designers such as **KELLY HOPPEN** used it to add textural contrast and clean lines to an interior. A more recent trend is to soften this edgy material further with pretty, decorative designs. **JETHRO MACEY** (Jethromacey.com) experiments with digital technology to emboss concrete tiles with floral designs. When pieced together, the tiles create a large repeat rose pattern, originally taken from old lace, to form attractive but durable flooring. He will also work to commission and make one-off panels or floor tiles to a specific design.

Interiors store **CARAVAN** (Caravanstyle.com) in Spitalfields stocks ornate concrete candlesticks that give the simple building material a new air of grandeur; while the London-based **PETR WEIGL** studio (Petrweigl.com), designs and makes graphic sculptural wall pieces with an organic twist. His work draws inspiration from land formations – erosion and fossilisation – injecting a natural process into a manufactured construction material to stunning effect.

In Sixties Palm Springs architecture, the use of concrete inside the house was a lighthearted expression of southern California's "indoor-outdoor" lifestyle. You may recognise the **ARTHUR ELROD HOUSE**, designed in 1968 by architect John Lautner, from the 1971 Bond movie

Diamonds Are Forever. The owners now rent out the massive concrete "tent" with commanding views of Palm Springs, so you can experience the mid-century modern aesthetic for yourself (Privateworldvillas.com).

Concrete seems an obvious material for indoor-outdoor furniture, but its weight makes it impractical. However, designers are now using concrete to coat lightweight frames, creating furniture that is both strong and easily transportable. **ESTABLISHED & SONS'** latest collection includes the "Drift" bench, constructed from glass-reinforced plastic with a concrete skin (Establishedandsons.com), while **RICHARD MACKNESS** (Barbedltd.co.uk) designs benches and urns in a similar vein – with a tough concrete exterior to withstand all weather conditions, and a lightweight core for practicality.

Architecturally, this method has been applied to the **MOUNT HARTMAN BAY ESTATE** in Grenada, where a steel and chicken-wire framework has been coated in concrete. The cave-like house, with not a single straight line in sight, appears to be growing out of the rock-face on which it was built, and is available to rent (Mounthartmanbay.com).

If you're keen on the look of concrete but don't like its adamant nature, **GUFAM's** "Softcrete" furniture, designed by Ross Lovegrove for the new Morimoto restaurant (Morimotorestaurant.com) in New York, will be right up your street. Softcrete explores the nature of surprise when pieces that appear hard and dense are unexpectedly soft. Made of polyurethane foam, it is perfect for the concrete aesthete with a delicate backside, and is available to buy from the company (Gufam.com).



"Softcrete" furniture, price on application, at Gufram