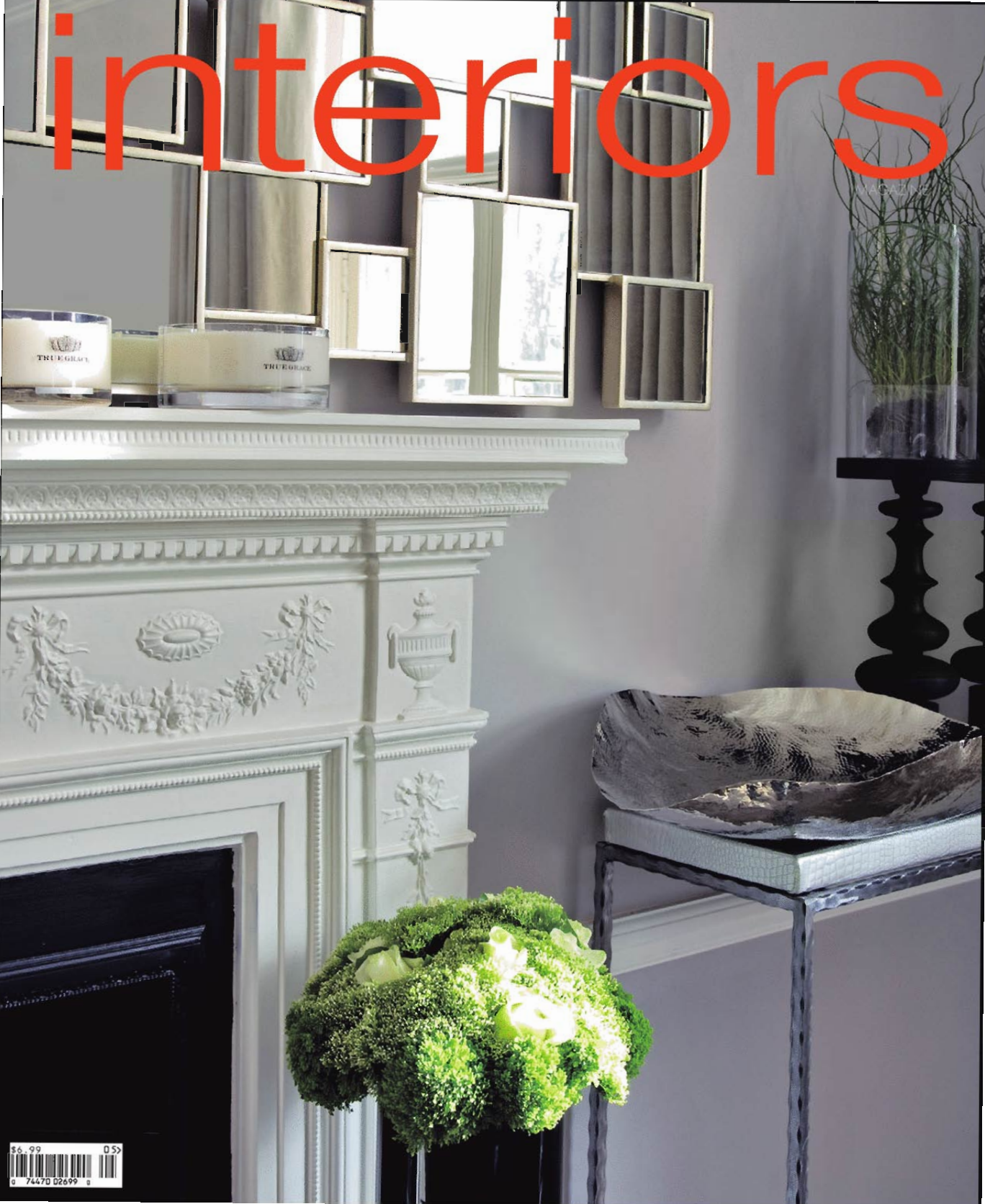


# interiors



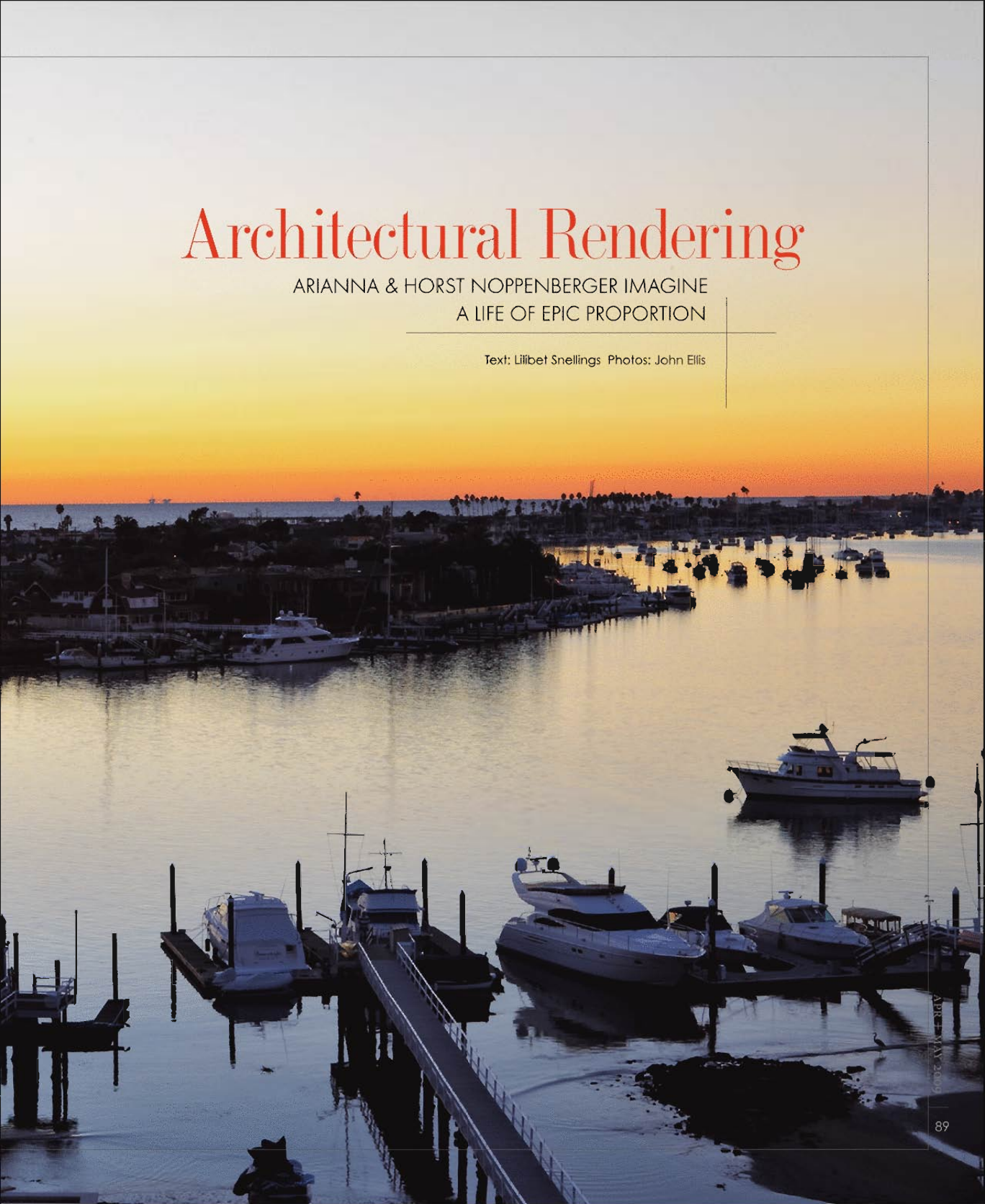
\$6.99 053  
74470 02699 0



# Architectural Rendering

ARIANNA & HORST NOPPENBERGER IMAGINE  
A LIFE OF EPIC PROPORTION

Text: Liibet Snellings Photos: John Ellis





e

IGHTEEN YEARS AGO THE GERMAN-BORN ARCHITECT

Horst Noppenberger was at a party celebrating the completion of his first residential project in Laguna Beach, California, when he extended his hand to help a young Italian woman named Arianna through some construction rubble. She had recently completed an interior design program in Milan and was visiting California to study its progressive architecture. "I know it sounds corny, but it was love at first sight," Horst says. Two years later, Arianna left Italy and they were married in California. Since then, the couple—he the principal of Horst Architects and she the founder of Aria Design—have amassed a prolific portfolio of highly inventive contemporary homes, which incorporate the natural environment and blur the boundaries between indoors and out. With their signature style, the work evokes organic modernists Frank Lloyd Wright and Rudolph Schindler.

Sitting in the dining room of their latest project—the second home of Marilyn and Jeff Beck in Corona del Mar, California, Horst says, "Arianna thinks spatially, not decoratively and that's why we work so well together." She adds, "In Italy we train to be architects of interiors. It's not just about picking fabrics and furniture, you first have to carve the space."





















t

HIS MUTUAL DEVOTION TO THE ART OF ARCHITECTURE is evident in the Beck residence, where the Noppenbergers first task was creating a double-height entry. Horst says, "The entry was two floors stacked on top of each other. When you walked in, it was impossible to read the entire space." At only 2,000 square feet, the project was also an exercise in efficiency and restraint. "We work with a limited amount of materials because we don't believe every room has its own theme or colors," Arianna says. "We believe less is more." Throughout the house, they used one material—Turkish Travertine—on the walls, floors and countertops. Minimalism is executed in even the most minute details: the heating and air-conditioning ducts are simple slots in the ceiling, the shower drain is a slit in the side with a slightly sloping grade, and the light switches are almost invisible. The television and shades retract into the ceiling, providing unobstructed harbor views through frameless windows.

Incorporating the natural surroundings—whether it's a waterfront view, or a seaside cliff—is a hallmark of Horst's work. "We're always working on hillsides. Rather than just plopping a house on top of a hill, we like to build a house that is of the hill, where the natural contours and topography are still present. Maybe the house cantilevers, thus there's this playfulness, this weightlessness." Arianna interjects, "And that weightlessness extends to the interiors," she says, pointing to the entry. "Look at the staircase: it is open and floating."

Like any husband and wife, though, they don't agree on everything. "But having divergent opinions makes the client feel more comfortable to give their opinion too," Arianna says. Horst adds, laughing, "Some clients start keeping score after a while: As of last week, it was seven for Arianna and four for Horst!" ■ *Aria Design, 247 Forest Avenue, Suite C, Laguna Beach, California 949 376 5996 x223 ariades.com*