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SILICON VALLEY

SOMETHING OLD, SPRING HOME & DESIGN ISSUE SOMETHING NEW

Lolly Winston
checks out
the auction action

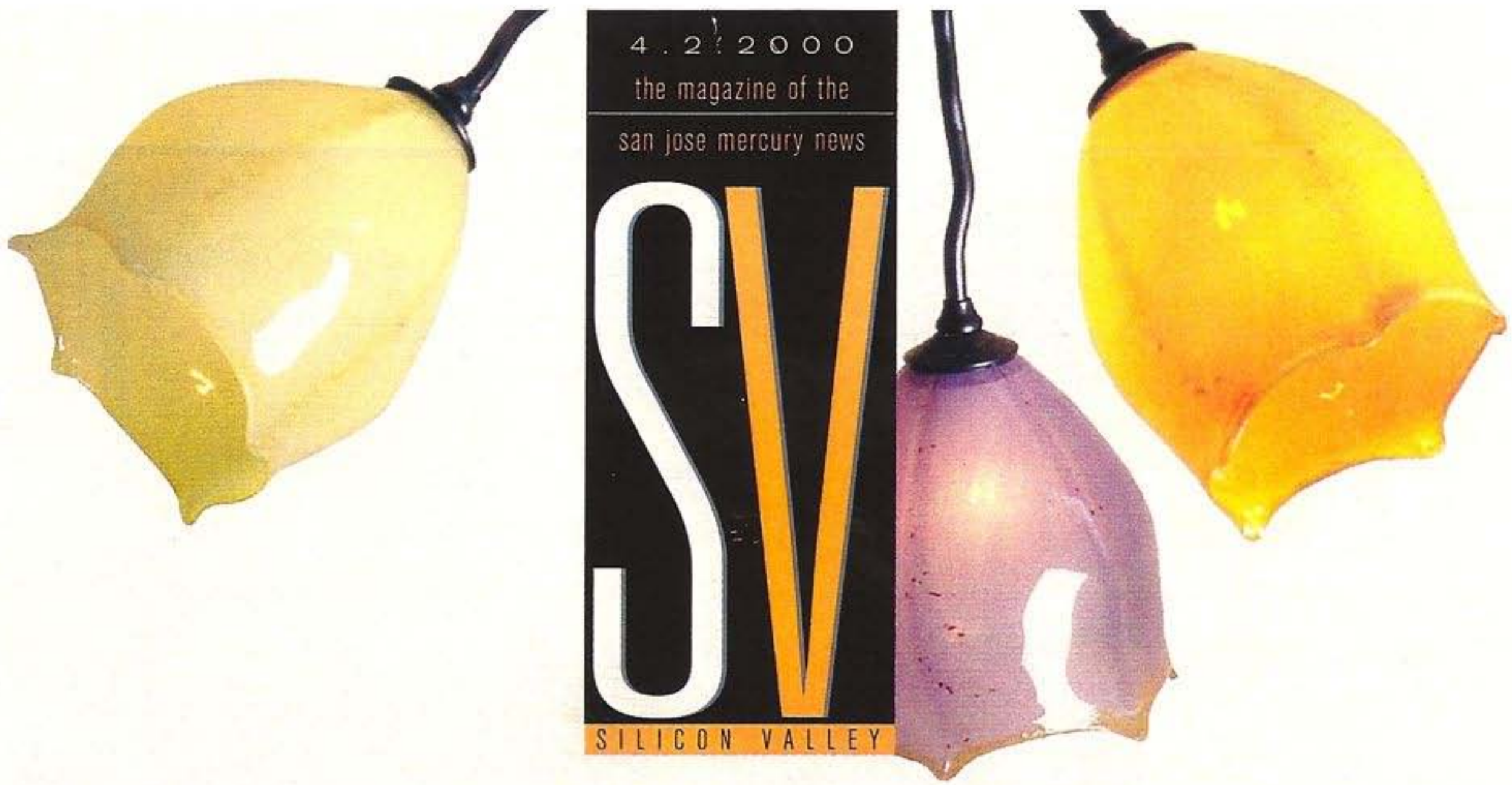
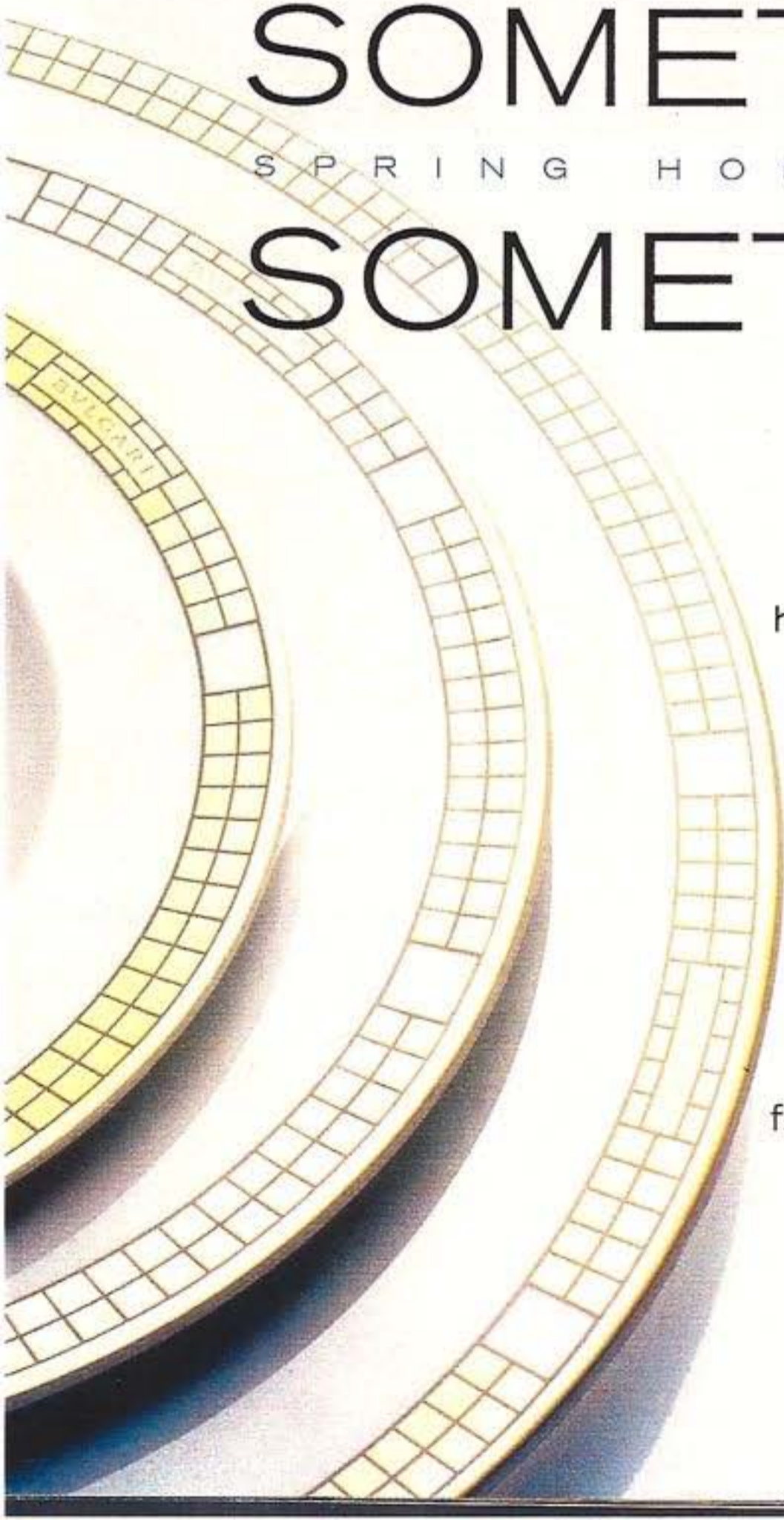
Laura Kurtzman
hunts for flea market
treasures

Marisa Milanese
comes up
with bright new
lighting ideas

Kim Ratcliff
spots the latest
decorating trends

Mary Gottschalk
finds special touches
for your home

Laurie Daniel
helps you
start a wine cellar



ILLUMINATING decor



Globes in mango, lilac and red by Roxanne Spring spark up this fixture from Metro Lighting. Shades run about \$200 each.

CHANDELIERS can be a lot like Cadillacs: too big, too shiny and, frankly, a little too much. "They're like someone's idea of 'Look at me, I've made it,'" says Pam Pennington, an interior architect in Palo Alto.

Pennington has never liked their frilly shapes or their emphasis on crystal and gold. And she's not alone. With the minimalist aesthetic pervading most homes these days, streamlined rooms don't have much place for dangling droplets or rococo flourishes, and chandeliers seem to have gone the way of canopy beds and pleated drapes. That is, until now.

Local designers have recently begun to revisit the form and reimagine its potential, finding freshness in these objets d'art.

RICHARD KOCI HERNANDEZ



Traditionalists may prefer this Kathleen Caid chandelier (\$4,500) from Worldware.

JOSIE LEPIE

By Marisa Milanese

Chandeliers, those fussy fixtures of old, are reinvented with modern materials and designs.

They're buying up flea market-find chandeliers and bringing them up to date. They're designing new chandeliers out of modern materials such as topiary wire, plastic beads and handblown glass. And they're making critics like Pennington eat a little crow for her biting commentary. In the past few months, Pennington has installed chandeliers in dining rooms and entryways along the Peninsula and in night clubs in San Francisco. When it comes to the potential of the chandelier, she admits, she has finally seen the light.

So has Patty Horton. She and her husband Randy, owners of an office furniture dealership in Santa Clara, recently remodeled the dining room in their Los Gatos home to make it a more formal space—not that

they're formal people. They don't own china or crystal, and they never would have considered hanging a typical crystal chandelier.

"Those things are gaudy," Horton says.

But at Pennington's encouragement, they installed a piece made by Jim Misner, a lighting design artist based in San Francisco who also creates one-of-a-kind lamps assembled from found objects. Built from strands of topiary wire, the chandelier seems to float above their round dining room table. Horton describes the airy piece as a "soft" presence, which was precisely Misner's goal; he set out to design a chandelier that had mass but wouldn't overwhelm a space the way many traditional models do. And while he added strings of beads (even metal springs in some

cases), the flourishes feel whimsical instead of fussy.

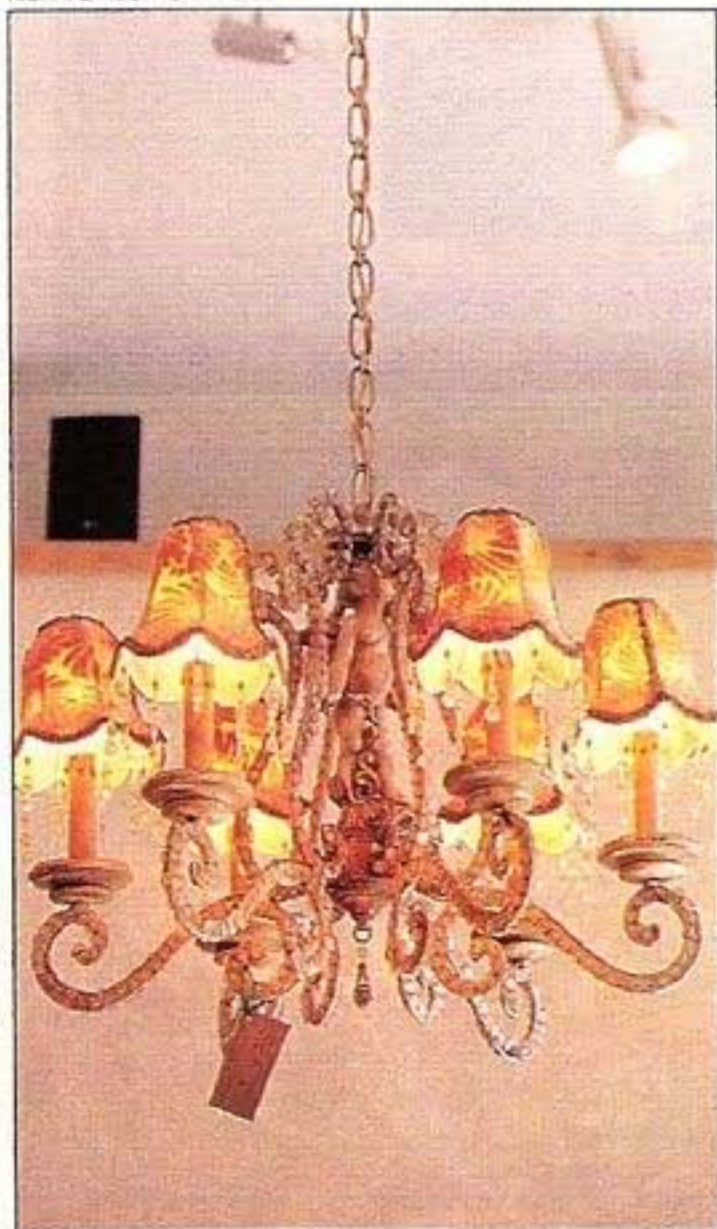
"Jim's designs are very tongue-in-cheek," says Pennington.

His chandelier punctuates the center of the Hortons' dining room like a subtle spotlight. It offers a focal point. With homes getting bigger and grander throughout Silicon Valley, designs like Misner's not only light a vast space, they make it more intimate.

"As mundane as this sounds, that's the best function of a chandelier," says John Martin, creative director of Turner-Martin Residential Design in Palo Alto. "It can bring down a high ceiling and make a room feel more comfortable and cozy."

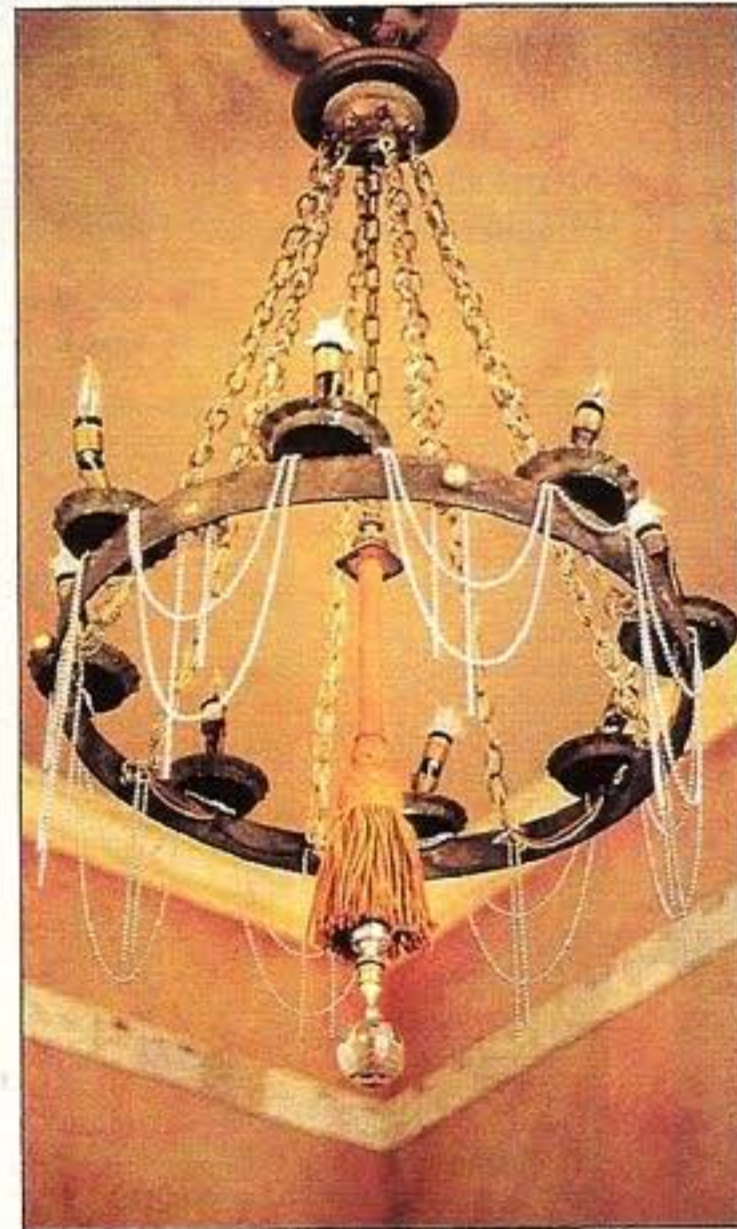
Of course it's hard to feel cozy when the

RICHARD KOCI HERNANDEZ



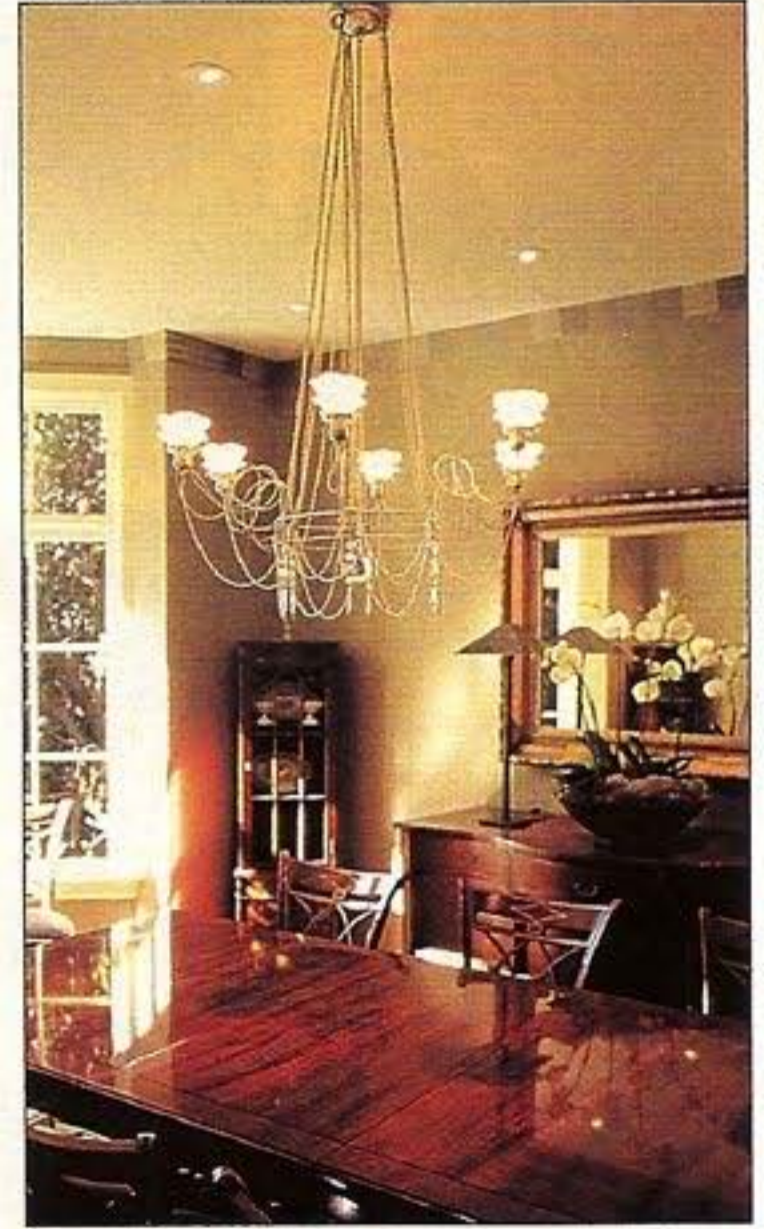
Caid's shades mute the harshness of the bulbs and make the light more flattering.

JIM MISNER LIGHTING DESIGN



Jim Misner of San Francisco creates unique chandeliers and lamps from found objects.

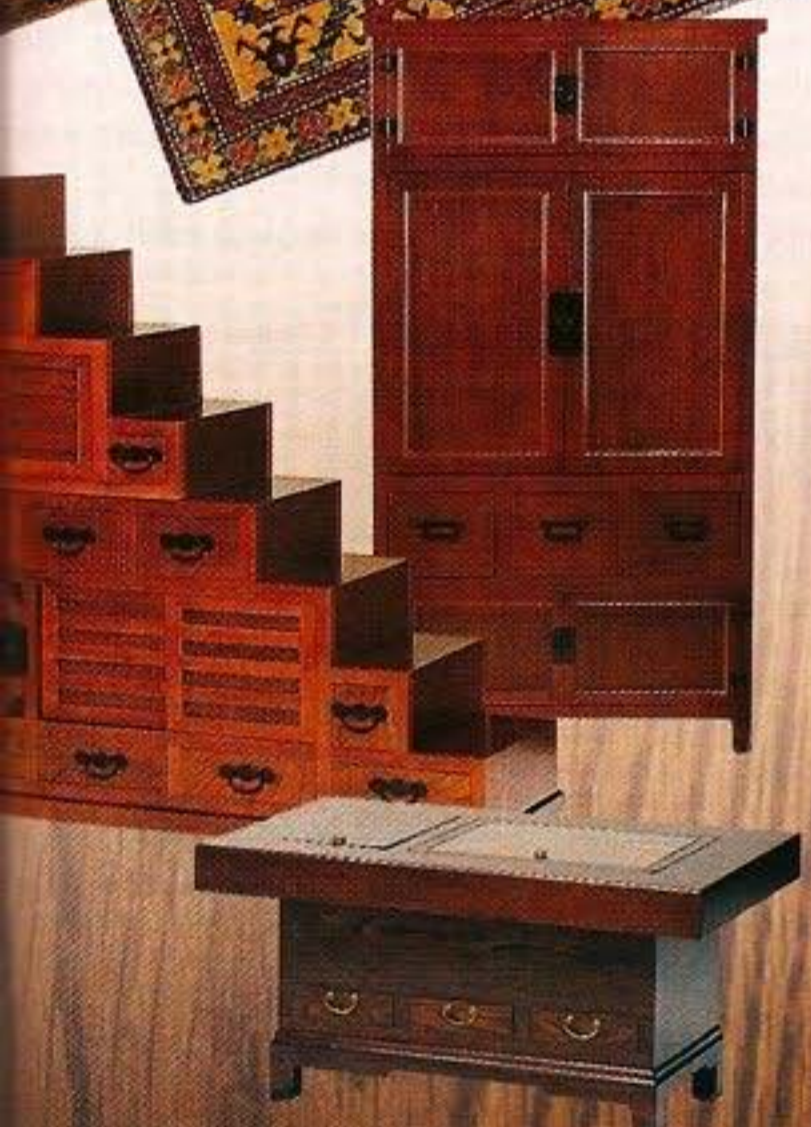
JIM MISNER LIGHTING DESIGN



A chandelier, like this custom design by Misner, can give a focal point to a room.

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CHANDELIERS

light itself is more akin to glaring than glowing—which is often the case with traditional chandeliers. Problem is, the bulbs aren't tucked under shades but shoot straight from their sockets, fully exposed. Unless dimmed to near darkness, the undiffused filaments produce a piercing, not to mention unflattering, light.

"Lighting should not only look great," says Roxanne Spring, a local lighting designer, "you should look great in your lighting."

Well put. Spring, whose designs are sold through her Berkeley studio Kindabugsya, recalls sitting under the glare of a chandelier at a restaurant, thinking: "If everyone else looks this bad, I must, too." Every blemish was highlighted, every complexion seemed sickly. Spring says her designs solve this problem. They're handblown glass shades that come in bright colors (persimmon, celadon, mango, jade) and unusual shapes (moonflowers, deelybobs, bamboo). While they're most often used as pendant lights—a single bulb and shade dangling on a cord—they can be strung together to create a very modern, very funky take on the chandelier. Regardless of how you choose to arrange them, the lights cast a delicate, colorful luminescence. One Berkeley store, Metro Lighting, creates unique fixtures that com-

plement the one-of-a-kind shades.

Kathleen Caid's designs, on the other hand, are a more traditional nod to the form. Based in Los Angeles, she salvages and rewires old chandeliers from flea markets and antique stores, and enhances them with a collection of found materials: lace lamp shades, ceramic birds, beaded flowers, tiny cherubs. Anything, she says that moves her: "I'm just looking for the unusual." The result? Chandeliers that are as much functional pieces as pieces of art, traditional designs with a healthy dose of irreverence.

"It's like looking at this classic thing and saying, 'Well, this is really kind of silly . . . now I'm going to make it something fun,'" Pennington says.

JIM MISNER LIGHTING DESIGN



Designs like Jim Misner's (\$2,000 and up) make vast spaces more intimate.

JIM MISNER LIGHTING DESIGN



That's something many people buying chandeliers now seem to agree on: Their dining rooms and entryways are less showcases of their affluence than reflections of their personal styles. "People today want to make a statement," agrees Greg Henson, an interior designer and owner of Worldware furniture in San Francisco, which sells all kinds of contemporary chandeliers. "And it's not 'I have money' but 'I have taste.'"

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