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SOLID FOUNDATIONS

A group of young architects is shaping what Austin will look like in the years to come

MID-MODERN LIFE

A Roland Roessner home sets the stage for creativity and community

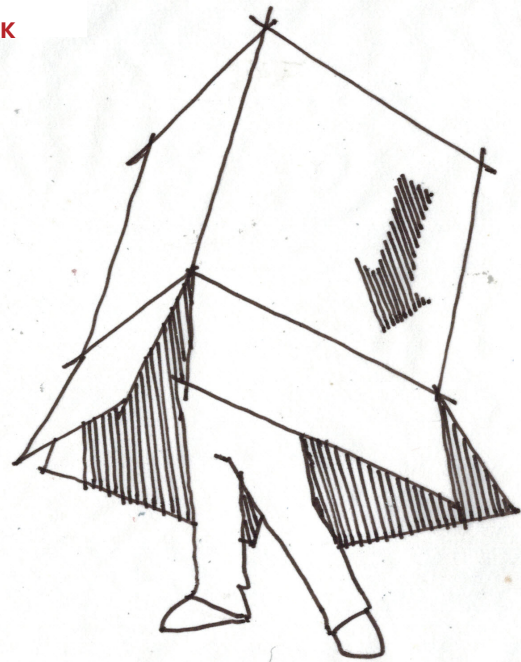
WALKING THE LINE

A look into the new Line hotel



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17
YEARS



This Side Up

HOW ONE ROLLINGWOOD FAMILY'S BACKYARD IS THE PERFECT HOME FOR A SCULPTURAL PLAYSCAPE

By Margaret Williams

Photographs by Leonid Furmansky

THE IDEA BEGAN WITH A QUICK DRAWING - LEGS POKING out from under a packing box. But when the person charged with bringing that sketch to life is Dave Kilpatrick, partner at Tim Cuppett Architects, the results are anything but slapdash. As Kilpatrick and his team were wrapping up the newly built, modern, art-filled home designed for Ricardo and Isabel Del Blanco, the homeowners asked for one last element: something in the backyard for the couple's four kids and their friends. Kilpatrick, riffing off the couple's tactile art collection, thought, "Man, that's an opportunity to make a sculpture in the yard." Tasked with the request and the couple's one requirement — the structure had to also serve as a toy garage — Kilpatrick decided, "We ought to make a giant cardboard box. It's the idea of the quintessential kids' fort. It's an upside-down box."



Kilpatrick knew he wanted to make the two-story fort out of cedar, since the material would eventually "silver out and become the color of a box," but it took him a bit longer to come up with the fort's other signature component, a large red stamp that reads "Hecho en Mexico." Kilpatrick explains, "We started playing with how to reinforce the idea that it's a box. At one point I had 'Fragile' spray-painted, and then we tried the international 'This Side Up' paired with a big arrow." But Kilpatrick wanted something more personal, and since the couple is from Mexico and the phrase "Hecho en Mexico" is ever-present in their home country, he decided to stamp the symbol upside down, "reinforcing the idea that the box is flipped upside down." Kilpatrick and the homeowners are all equally pleased with the final fort design (built by Risher Martin Fine Homes), which the architect describes as more object than building. But we were most curious about the fort's smallest critics. What did Ricardo and Isabel's oldest kids, five-and-a-half-year-old twins Benjamin and Santiago, have to say about their newest backyard staple? We quizzed the boys about the fort as their younger brother, Pablo and neighborhood friends madly dashed up and down and in and out of the inventive space. "My favorite part is being up high." proclaimed Benjamin. ⁷