

# METROPOLIS

May 2009

## Pinning Our **HOPES** on the Wind

A visionary new idea to achieve  
energy independence—by using  
the towers we already have

Nine ways to help break our  
unhealthy addiction to oil





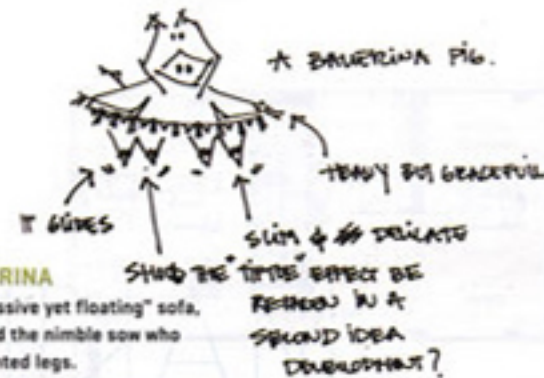
#### COLORS

The hues of Calibra's pillows, shell, and stripes can all be specified separately.



#### PIGGY BALLERINA

Asked for a "massive yet floating" sofa, Claudia sketched the nimble sow who inspired the pointed legs.



A breakout effort by two young Salvadoran designers lends fresh flair to Bernhardt Design's Global Edition collection.

With its black-sand beaches and crystalline lagoons, El Salvador might be a paradise for tourists, but for designers it's far less hospitable. A 12-year civil war and a handful of environmental disasters have left the Central American country with the most nascent of manufacturing bases. Raw materials are expensive, retail outlets are few, and furnishings are often made by hand. Given these conditions, it's remarkable that Claudia and Harry Washington, two young interior designers from the capital, San Salvador, were tapped to create six pieces for Bernhardt Design's 2009 Global Edition, the furniture company's star-studded international collection. Even more remarkable is that the artfully detailed sofas, love seats, and

chairs that make up the line (which is called Calibra) are the couple's first-ever pieces to be industrially produced.

"As a culture, Salvadorans usually don't like plain stuff," Claudia says, explaining the influences behind Calibra. "We like modern. We can simplify a shape, but it always has to have a detail. It's unconscious, but it gives it personality, character—" Harry, her husband, jumps in: "Salsa," he says with a laugh. "That twist—there's always something that has to be a silent shout."

Claudia says she wanted Calibra to resemble "a small pig on pointe." And indeed, the seats are voluptuous and oversize, delicately hovering over faceted aluminum feet. A deep V-shaped cutout

between the arms and backrest reduces the bulk and frames two thin, inlaid stripes of fabric that stretch across the back cushions. (The pieces are also available in a version without the cutout, Calibra.02). Upholstery options range from a single monochromatic textile to a full-on Mondrian effect, with as many as six different fabrics and hues on the stripes, the cushions, and the interior and exterior of the shell.

"Part of the exercise was creating one beautiful platform that you could personalize so easily and that could be used for both residential and commercial applications," says Jerry Helling, Bernhardt's creative director. "It's not just a general, run-of-the-mill, cookie-cutter piece. But then, you

can also have that version if you would like."

Bernhardt's willingness to propel the Washingtons to a global stage, showing them alongside design superstars such as Yves Béhar and Arik Levy, was quite a leap of faith. The couple had originally learned about the company on a trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, when Harry purchased an issue of *Metropolis* (June 2005) that featured Helling's collaborations with students at California's Art Center College of Design. "We realized the style of our furniture was similar to that being featured," Claudia says. "At that moment, we said, 'One day, we'll work for this guy.' But those things you just say and want to believe."

In November 2007 the pair was *continued on page 141*



# MAKING THE CUT

#### THE V

To reduce bulk and show off the striped "shout," the designers cut into the arms.



#### THE DESIGNERS

Harry and Claudia Washington are partners in Due Studio, based in San Salvador.