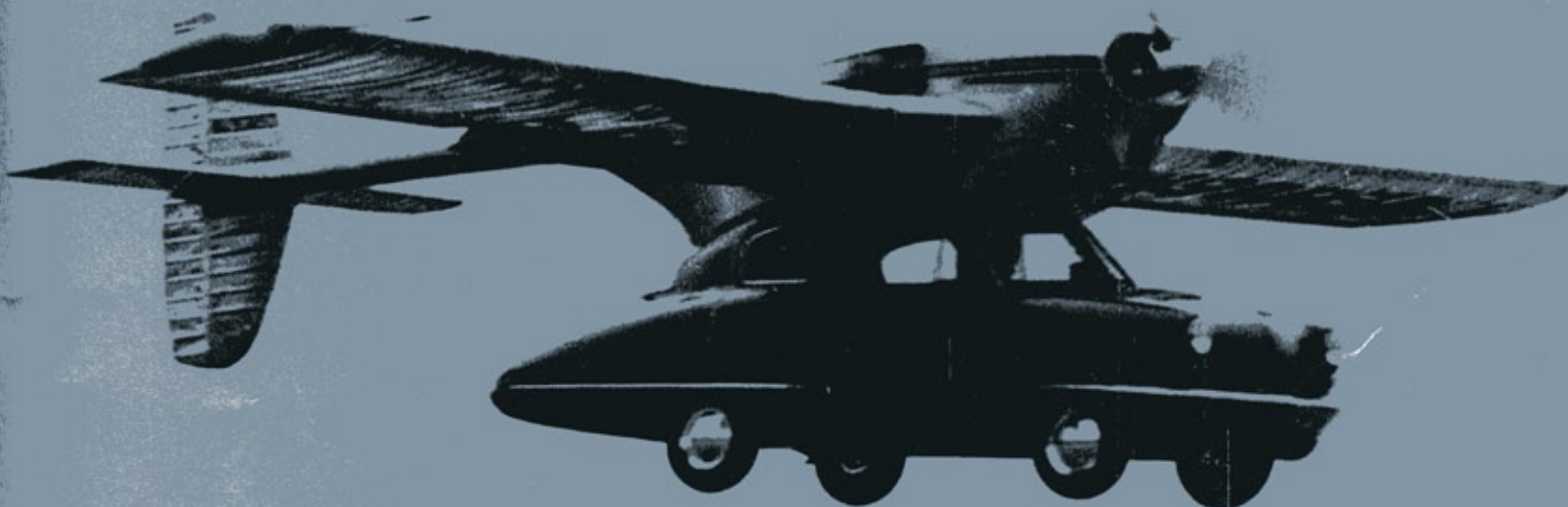


I.D.

**Las Vegas:
Post-Sin City
The Meaning
of Multimedia**

**Nike gets real
Wurman gets personal**



Flights of Fancy

A secret history of design in Los Angeles



Architecture

California Collaborative

To graphic designer April Greiman, it's "like what leaves in the jungle look like when they're wet." To architect Michael Rotondi, it's "an attempt to see what happens when you push order to the point where complexity becomes chaos." They're both talking about Nicola, a restaurant that is the result, says Greiman, "of a spiritual collaboration between us — if not always a physical one, because it's hard to get this guy in the same room with you sometimes." Rotondi, who also runs the Southern California Institute of Architecture and travels around the world attending to projects and lectures, sees the work he does with Greiman (with whom he shares a house as well as an interest in things spiritual) as "what keeps you centered, balanced, focused."

For such a place of equilibrium, Nicola, which looks like a tent without a covering cowering at the base of a pompous downtown Los Angeles skyscraper, is a strangely tentative and tentacular place. Perhaps that is because it became a place where Rotondi and Greiman tried out ideas they share about transformation, spirituality and collaboration itself — the

two are nothing if not autobiographical in their work. The varnished wood ribs that turn the seating areas into a place of curving architectural order, for instance, at their ends become the twigs they collected on their hikes, and that also help to hold up one of the walls in Greiman's house. The curve Greiman introduced became a steel octopus whose tentacles are lamps created by industrial designer Lisa Krohn. To put this all together, Rotondi called on his contractor brother, John. The final collaborator was the client, renowned chef Larry Nicola, who is also an old friend and compatriot.

Greiman takes credit for the surfaces, all the way from the graphic-identity items to the green varnish on the tables, while Rotondi struggled with gravity and connections. Together, they drew their wider circle of employees, craftspeople, friends and family into a sort of workshop that finalized the whole structure in the process of construction. The result is not a building in the traditional sense of the word, but an open concatenation of spaces delineated by evocative swirls and rhythmic structures that transform the ponderous forms of the existing



Michael Rotondi, April Greiman and Lisa Krohn's collaborative work at Nicola.

building into a thicket of machined materials and sylvan surfaces.

This is an architecture for a city that sees itself dissolving, if not into the Pacific, then certainly into the electronic waves and abstract philosophies of New Age modernism. In that vein, Rotondi, who is already working with Greiman on several other collaborative projects, claims that Nicola is just the

beginning. "Everything around us is integrating, in technology, in art, in society," he maintains. "I see the new tribalism as a way in which people go off to find their own integrity, so that they can come together again as discrete parts working together." Perhaps the Nicola project, then, is the first longhouse of this particular Los Angeles tribe. AARON BETSKY

The Magazine Without a Name



terly, which has been put together by a motley, faceless crew of designers, artists, writers, filmmakers, scientists, architects, cooks and politicians. "The receiver is invited to copy, use and redo the contributions so that these ideas flow into new networks," asserts *n.n.* creator Werner Lippert, who sees this kind of publishing as

The idea of technology opening new avenues of communication to all who care to participate is what drives *n.n.*, the self-named "anonymous electronic magazine" published in Dusseldorf, Germany. Two Macintosh disks comprise this copyright-free digital quarter-

the death knell of traditional concepts of authorship. This techno-utopian vision is evident in the magazine's graphic identity: each disk is labeled with a pixelated single eye juxtaposed with an open hand. The magazine, which features a random array of stories, graphics, recipes and animations, is available on order or can be accessed in the future through both AppleLink and CompuServe networks.

