

SPECIAL HOME ISSUE

Town & Country

ESTABLISHED IN 1846

DESIGNS FOR FAMILY LIVING

L.A.
KEEPING
IT NATURAL

DALLAS
LOVING
THE MODERN
LOOK

**NEW YORK
CITY**
COOKING
FOR A CROWD

BERKSHIRES
RENEWING
A FAMILY FARM



L.A. interior designers
Alexandra and
Michael Misczynski
with son Miles

ARTS & CULTURE

Out of the Box

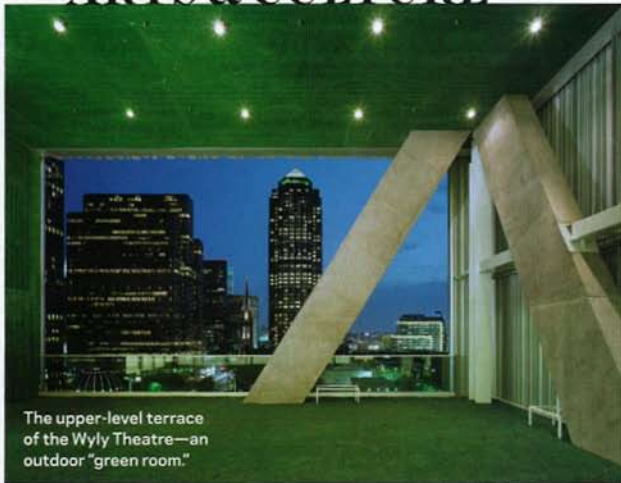
Two big-drama buildings inaugurate the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts.



Visitors enter the Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre through a below-grade lobby; upper floors clad in tubular aluminum top a glass-walled performance hall.

TAKE A FEW of the world's most ingenious architects, ten under-utilized acres and the cultural ambitions of wealthy north Texas and you have the makings of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, opening this month in the downtown Arts District. Though the \$354 million center won't be complete until 2011, when a city-

funded performance venue and an outdoor amphitheater are finished, the campus is already home to five local companies and two buildings that are worth getting on a plane to see, whether they're hosting a hot ticket while you're in town or not. The Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre, a collaboration between Rem Koolhaas and Joshua



The upper-level terrace of the Wyly Theatre—an outdoor “green room.”

Prince-Ramus (a former principal in Koolhaas’s firm), upends the traditional theater floor plan by stacking spaces vertically and using a mechanized system that can quickly reconfigure the 600 seats and proscenium; passersby can watch the action through glass curtain walls. The Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, designed by Norman Foster, hides a voluptuous chocolate-hued hall with quick-change capabilities of its own inside a cherry-red wrapper that beckons to visitors through a glass facade. When part of the facade is retracted, the lobby and its restaurant and café open onto a campus-wide park, the work of French landscape architect Michel Desvigne. Eager to show off its shape-shifting architecture, the center has programmed a week of opening events from October 12 through 18. Everyone’s invited, and many of the tickets are free—so come and applaud the determination of Dallas, where architectural innovation has two new homes. dallasperformingarts.org. S.M.

A FASHIONABLE MUSE

Few women have had much experience with haute couture, the exceptional handmade clothes that are the merging of art and fashion. Philanthropist and style icon **Betsy Bloomingdale**, now in her eighties, was fortunate enough to collect such treasures, 125 of which she donated to the museum at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, a California college. This fall, sixty examples are on display at the school’s downtown Los Angeles campus.

The exhibition is a rare opportunity to get close enough to appreciate these unique creations, says Kevin Jones, who cocurated the show with Christina

Johnson. The two whittled down the selection to encompass day and evening wear made during the thirty-five-plus years in

which Bloomingdale collected couture, with ensembles from Givenchy, Saint Laurent, de la Renta, Dior and Chanel. Also on view are numerous croquis, or preliminary sketches, with attached

fabric swatches. One garment is displayed inside out “to show the complex construction of even an apparently simple sheath,” says Jones. “The seams are broadcast, and the buttonholes, handstitched. The hooks, eyes and snaps are covered in China silk.” The exhibition also demonstrates the creation of a fashion persona, Jones adds. “From the beginning, Mrs. Bloomingdale had a very clear knowledge of what would look good on her and what she needed for specific events—she was never over- or underdressed.”

Bloomingdale herself speaks of the clothes as relics of a fabulous past (she bought her last couture dress in 1996). When she began collecting, she says, the world of couture was



Betsy Bloomingdale in 1969, showing off a cotton-organdy dress by Marc Bohan for Dior.



small and exclusive, “like a family, and we had the most fun.” Things are different now, she acknowledges: “You can wear blue jeans to dinner.” Her voice holds no trace of regret; she has the memories. “One of my favorite pieces in the show is a summer dress from Dior with silk flowers,” she says. “And

there’s a Chanel—I can still get into it!—that took hours to snap up. I had such a good time in them.” *“High Style: Betsy Bloomingdale and the Haute Couture”* runs October 21 through December 13. *FIDM Museum & Galleries*, 919 South Grand Avenue; 213-623-5821; fidm.edu.

CAROL MITHERS