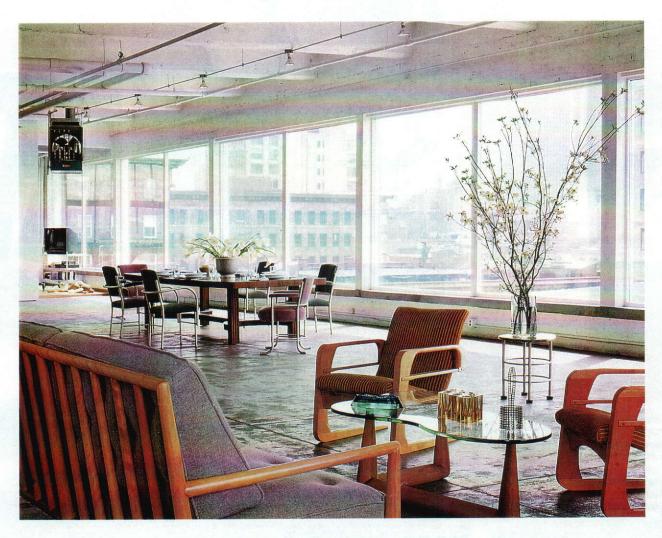
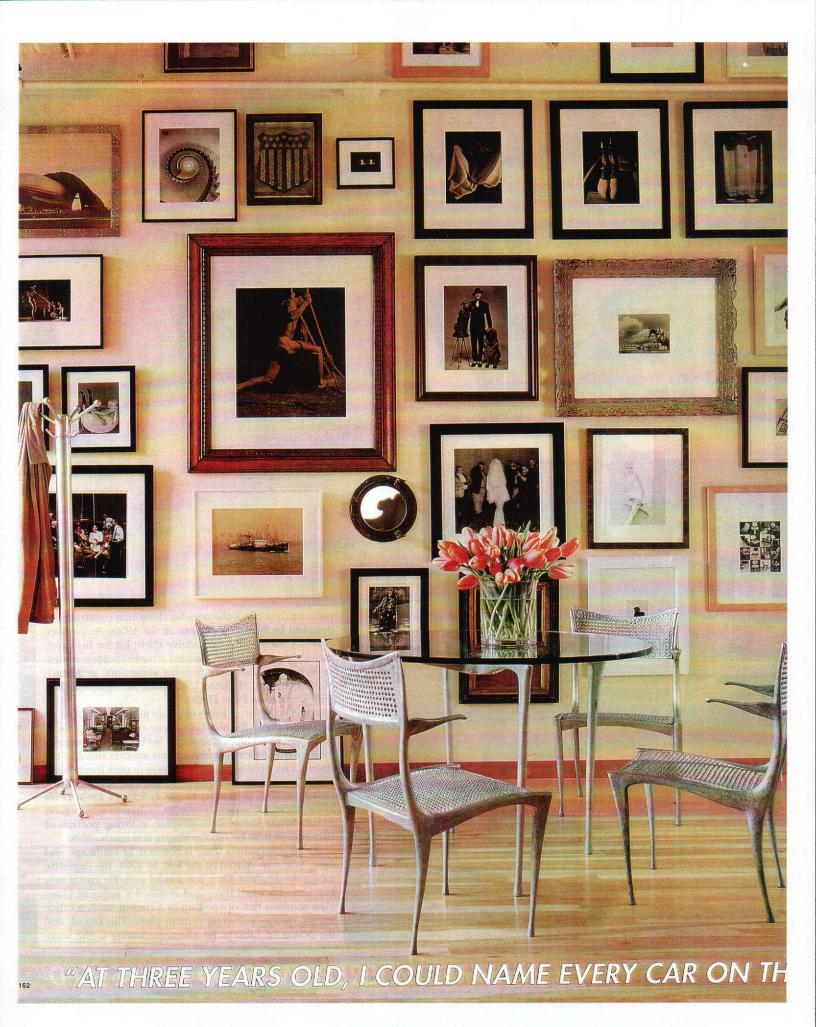
## UTILITARIAN CHIC

On any given day, Stuart Parr looks like a surfer boy, dressed casually in colorful shirts and shiny shorts or pants. But looks can be deceiving. His loft, a vast haven with beautiful views of the waterfront in lower Manhattan, is a cement bunker in the sky stocked with Modernist furniture,





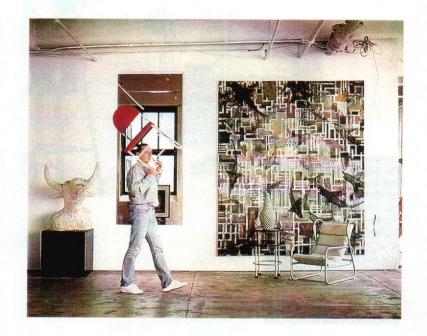






Though it's clear, after meeting him, that Parr is definitely not a typical surfer boy, he did grow up water-skiing on the American River in Sacramento, where his passion for the Modernist aesthetic took hold. "At three years old," he says, "I could name every car on the road: Auburn boat-tail speedsters, Cadillacs, Aston Martins." He also began learning about Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe from a friend of his father's who owned the lone hip art gallery in town. As a young man, Parr modeled in Europe and acted in a horror film before settling in New York, where he worked as a waiter at Raoul's. "On weekends," he says, "I would go picking with my then girlfriend, who had a collection of turn-of-the-century kids' clothes. I focused on furniture and objects." With \$200 in his pocket, Parr decided to make hunting furniture his day job. He discovered a forgotten department store in Philadelphia and bought 12 rolls of vintage linoleum there (they sold quickly in Manhattan). He also got hold of Deco fixtures, which he off-loaded at the building that now houses Robert De Niro's film studio. "I made, like, \$5,000 the second week."

The relentlessly energetic Parr began selling at the flea markets and paying to view furniture early at the Salvation Army in Brooklyn. "I found Alvar Aalto, Eames, Rohde," he says. One fortuitous day at a flea market, he







observed the sale of an aluminum chair for quite a bit of money. "I turned it over; the label read 'WARREN MCARTHUR, ROME, NY.'" The next afternoon Parr found himself in the upstate town of Rome. "I expected to find McArthur furniture everywhere," he says. "I was so depressed." Parr eventually tracked down some former McArthur factory workers and finally hit pay dirt. "I met guys who, some 60 years later, could tell you every seatpart number of the products: 'That's a 107583 with a 3 back and a 5B seat.'" Parr soon acquired a cache of important pieces from a movie theater and a Masonic temple. "The guys would say, 'Oh, yes, we did a job there.'"

Today Parr owns the exclusive rights to reproduce McArthur's designs. Working with a German manufacturer, he recently put out a line of repros, some of which now decorate Martha Stewart's new offices. Parr also rents out his high-ceilinged space for fashion-magazine photo shoots (even his McArthur pieces can be rented, at breathtaking day rates: sometimes up to 10 percent of full value). The peripatetic dealer is constantly moving things around, though, so prospective renters shouldn't expect to encounter the exact same space every time. On one visit, a circa-1929 mahogany boardroom table from the Crocker National Bank in San Francisco took up practically the entire breakfast area; on another, a cast-aluminum table and faux cane seats designed by Dan Johnson in the '50s had replaced it. And Parr has just sold the '20s rococo silver filigree headboard that framed his bed. As they say, Change is good. Especially for Stuart Parr. \*

