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FOUR ALTERNATIVE ROUTES IN AND OUT OF THE CITY

APRIL 2004

Chicago

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for Kids

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**THE SKINHEAD
NEIGHBOR**
The Tangled Web
of a Hate Crime

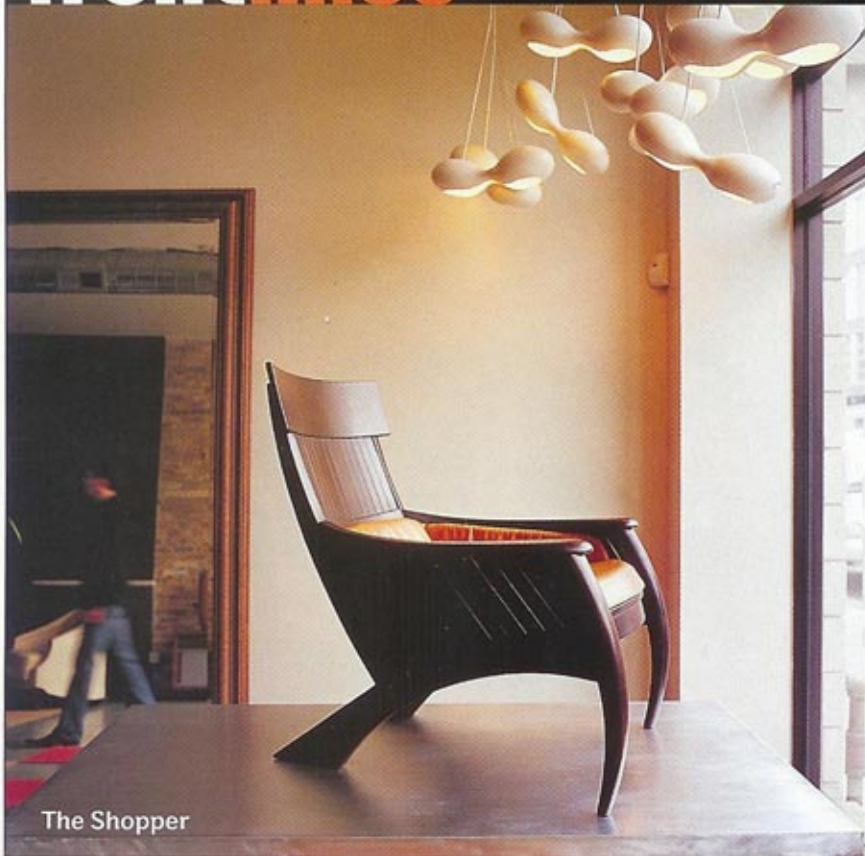
LORDY, LORDY
Robert Reed on
Conrad Black

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The Shopper

The New Modern

In Wicker Park, a highbrow home furnishings store pairs classic good taste with a flair for the adventurous

THE DESTINATION Abode, 1904 W. North Ave.; (773) 227-6400

THE OWNERS Soft-spoken business partners Jason Ballew, 31, and Darrick Draper, 27, met when they were living in Austin, Texas, and fantasized about one day opening their own furniture store. "If we both don't love it, we don't carry it," says Draper.

THE VIBE It feels like a 1970s suburban great room, illuminated by big, bright windows, with large-scale wood furniture, and touches of fiberglass, spun aluminum, and Italian textiles. Vignettes juxtaposing the different elements are cunningly assembled—not everyone would set a zinc-clad table on a goatskin rug and pull up a pair of white patent leather chairs. Approachable style? Perhaps. Inspirational? Definitely.

THE GOODS Many of the items are exclusive to Abode, and will be refreshingly new to most consumers. There are several lines from Brazil that marry wood and leather, including Etel Carmona's modular, stepped Crescute storage stand (\$7,900) and Carlos Motta's strong and curvy Sabre chair (\$2,800). There are chandeliers created from swoops of textural white fabric (\$1,995) and Rug Company's colorful floor coverings designed by William Yeoward, Paul Smith, and Marni (\$37.50 to \$85 per square foot). Although the two owners search far and wide for the unique, some of their most inspired finds have come from artisan friends, including Meringue's "Cocktail Hour"—classically styled chairs updated in brilliant silk (\$1,950)—and Byron Long's impressive acrylic paintings (\$2,400 to \$2,800).

THE VERDICT Think of the lines of the best new furniture, and throw in a few organic curves. For serious designers, and those merely serious about design. —STACY WALLACE-ALBERT



Draper (left) and Ballew

Theatre

Bums Rap

Four bleacher creatures and their Cubbies

NOT TOO FAR from Wrigley Field, Cubs fans—or, more accurately, actors playing Cubs fans—will celebrate *Bleacher Bums*, a 25th anniversary remount of the baseball comedy that helped put Organic Theatre on the map in 1979. The brain-child of Joe Mantegna (and co-written by the cast), the original play fictionalized a real-life gaggle of Cubs eccentrics attending a Cubs-Cardinals game in 1977; the show went on to successful runs in New York and Los Angeles and was made into a film for PBS. Four famous Chicago "bums" talk about their beloved Cubbies. —LUCIA MAURO

Opens April 25 for an open run, at Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St. Info: (312) 988-9000.



► **JOE MANTEGNA** (Decker in the original 1979 Chicago production)

What was your take on your character?

The play was an homage to the people we observed at Wrigley Field. Then we doctored them up. My character Decker was named for a guy named Becker, who was trying to make a fast buck. I was fascinated by the whole concept of fandom, and why these people were so loyal to a losing team.

► **DENNIS FRANZ** (Zig in the original 1979 Chicago production)

Have you landed baseball-themed parts after *Bleacher Bums*?

After my character, Sal Benedetto, was killed off on *Hill Street Blues*, I played a pitching coach in a TV series, *Bay City Blues*, which got canceled after 13 episodes.



► **DENNIS FARINA** (Decker in the 1989 Organic Theatre revival)

Any comments on Steve Bartman?

I, of course, absolutely wanted the Cubs to go to the World Series. When I saw what he did, at first I felt that almost anyone would have done it. But then, I thought, maybe this will cost them the Series . . . and it did. I'm still confident [the Cubs] will get there.

► **GEORGE WENDT** (Decker, after Farina, in the 1989 Organic Theatre revival)

What is your most amusing Wrigley Field memory?

I'm from the South Side, so I'm a Sox fan. I remember taking the bus from the South Side to Wrigley Field for a White Sox-Cubs exhibition game when I was a little boy. The weather turned cold at some point. Of course we weren't dressed for it and froze to death. So we spent the rest of the game in the bathroom trying to get warm.

