

Fall 2015

HOME + DESIGN

DEPARTURES

FALL 2015

Shanghatten!

Han Feng
Brings Her Shanghai
Style to One Magical
Manhattan Loft

Plus:

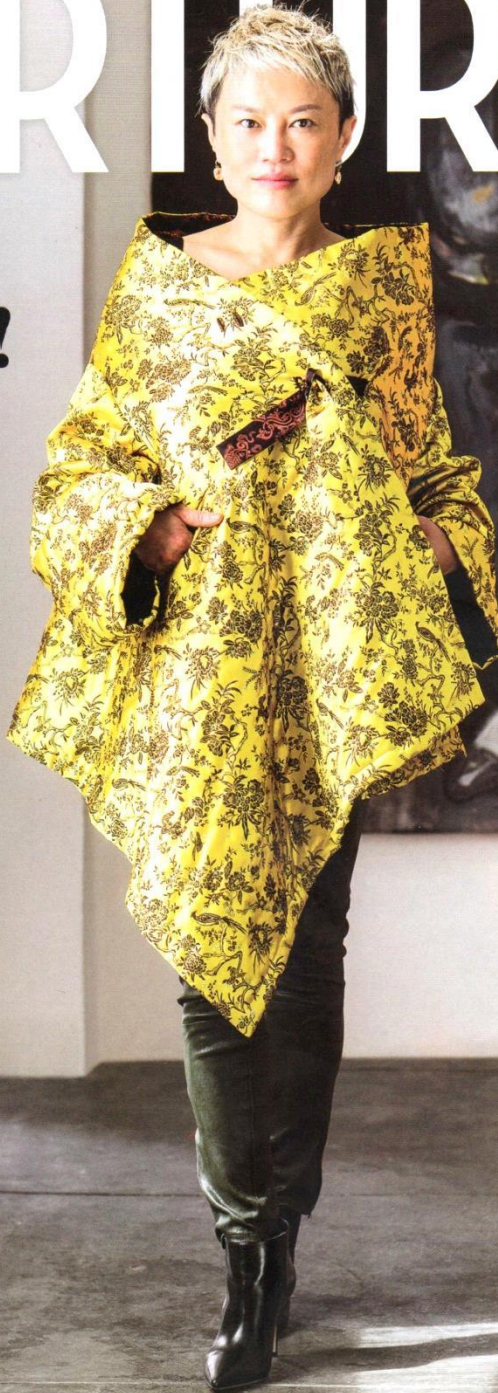
THE LAST HOUSE BY
Louis Kahn

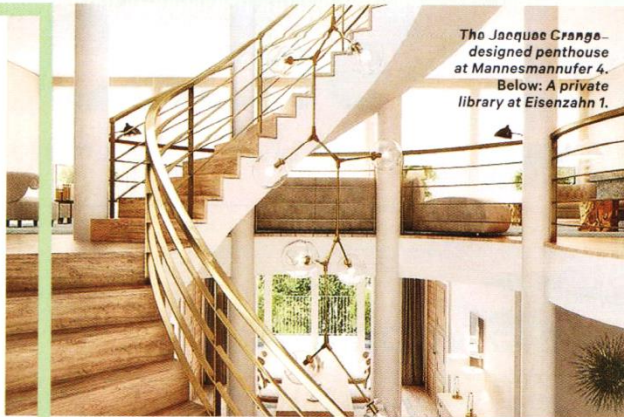
LONDON'S
Maison Assouline

MIAMI'S
Glass Act

HOW THE DUCHESS
OF DEVONSHIRE
TRANSFORMED THE
English
Country House

WHAT'S NEW AND
Worth It





The Jacques Grange-designed penthouse at Mannesmannufer 4. Below: A private library at Eisenbahn 1.



► REAL ESTATE

Daniel Ralf Schmitz

An astute scion brings a luxe aesthetic to Berlin.

Daniel Ralf Schmitz, the 35-year-old managing director of the 150-year-old German real estate firm Ralf Schmitz, is an unlikely rebel: He builds luxury neoclassical villas in a city known for cheap rents and a drab Communist aesthetic. Tricked out with Doric columns and wrought-iron balconies, his properties suggest generalized old-world largess, grounded in tradition but tailored to contemporary needs. "I brought walk-in closets to Germany," Schmitz says. "But I don't believe in design from scratch. It has to be founded in history and craftsmanship."

Aided by a network of artisans that his family has spent five generations cultivating, Schmitz can build a perfect traditional staircase. But while the developer's style skews historic, his business model is predictive: In 2004, two years after Berlin declared bankruptcy, Schmitz established a branch of his family's Düsseldorf-based business there

and pivoted from upper-middle-class properties to seriously high-end ones. "No one thought anyone would pay those prices," Schmitz says. (His units typically range from \$2.4 million to \$9.4 million.) Today he's cornered the city's luxury market. "Demand wasn't lacking," he says. "Quality supply was."

To that end, Schmitz has recently partnered with design stars like Jacques Grange and Louis Benech. Up next, a collaboration with Bottega Veneta on Eisenbahn 1, a 12-unit *hôtel particulier* in Berlin's historic Charlottenburg neighborhood and the fashion brand's first foray into residences. The result is next-level understatement: clean lines, hand-knotted rugs, and sensual leather, capped by a full-floor penthouse with a wrap-around terrace and killer views. "Berlin is a European capital again," Schmitz says. "It was time to do something really grand." ralfschmitz.com —*Gabriella Fuller*