

ELLE DESIGNING WOMEN


Barbarella. *The Jetsons*. “The future” has been playing on-screen for ages, so when is it going to show up in real life? That’s **Lindy Roy**’s job, and after much critical acclaim for undeveloped plans generated by her five-year-old firm, ROY Co., the South African soloist (ROY Co. is one of the few firms without a male partner) is finally going three-dimensional. Having previously spent two years in the academic, poststructuralist-driven Peter Eisenman’s office, Roy, now 41, is clearly reveling in her concrete venues of expression. For Hotel QT, hospitality czar André Balazs’ latest hyperdesigned budget spot in Times Square, she turned pint-size rooms into playful temples of efficiency using bunk beds, while a tiny pool brilliantly placed in wide-open view between the lobby and the bar gives a *Blade Runner*-goes-luxe voyeuristic thrill to the JetBlue jet set checking in at the automatic kiosks. Still in the planning stages, an undulating metal lodge in Alaska for heli-skiers will take daredevils to avalanche territory and the moon. When construction begins this summer on a small house on Long Island, Roy will join luminaries such as Zaha Hadid and Philip Johnson in building the first Hamptons elite inland subdivision. Her

contribution to the collection of one-off mini masterpieces features a wall created from a vertical plane of water that abruptly flips 90 degrees to become the pool.

The projects on paper that first got her noticed responded to reality show-worthy challenges. Roy planned a fiberglass pod spa in Botswana that could float on the fluctuating water levels of the Okavango River Delta, putting ecotourists eye to eye with slurping wildlife while lightly touching the sensitive environment. She envisioned a series of river barges carrying drive-in movie theaters, swimming pools, and neon-lit motels down the Mississippi through “Cancer Alley,” the site of approximately 25 percent of the country’s petrochemical plants, serving residents and inviting tourism after the industry dries up. Her realized projects also respond to less drastic but still confining environmental challenges: how to use every inch of space, cater to people desperate for a sense of escape, or address the dearth of waterfront property. “My designs aren’t futuristic for novelty’s sake,” Roy says. “They react to our culture and where the globe is being pushed by technology and population demands.” Roy’s future is now—get ready!—W.G.

THE ARCHITECTS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRISTIAN WITKIN



Surfacing:
Roy at
Hotel QT