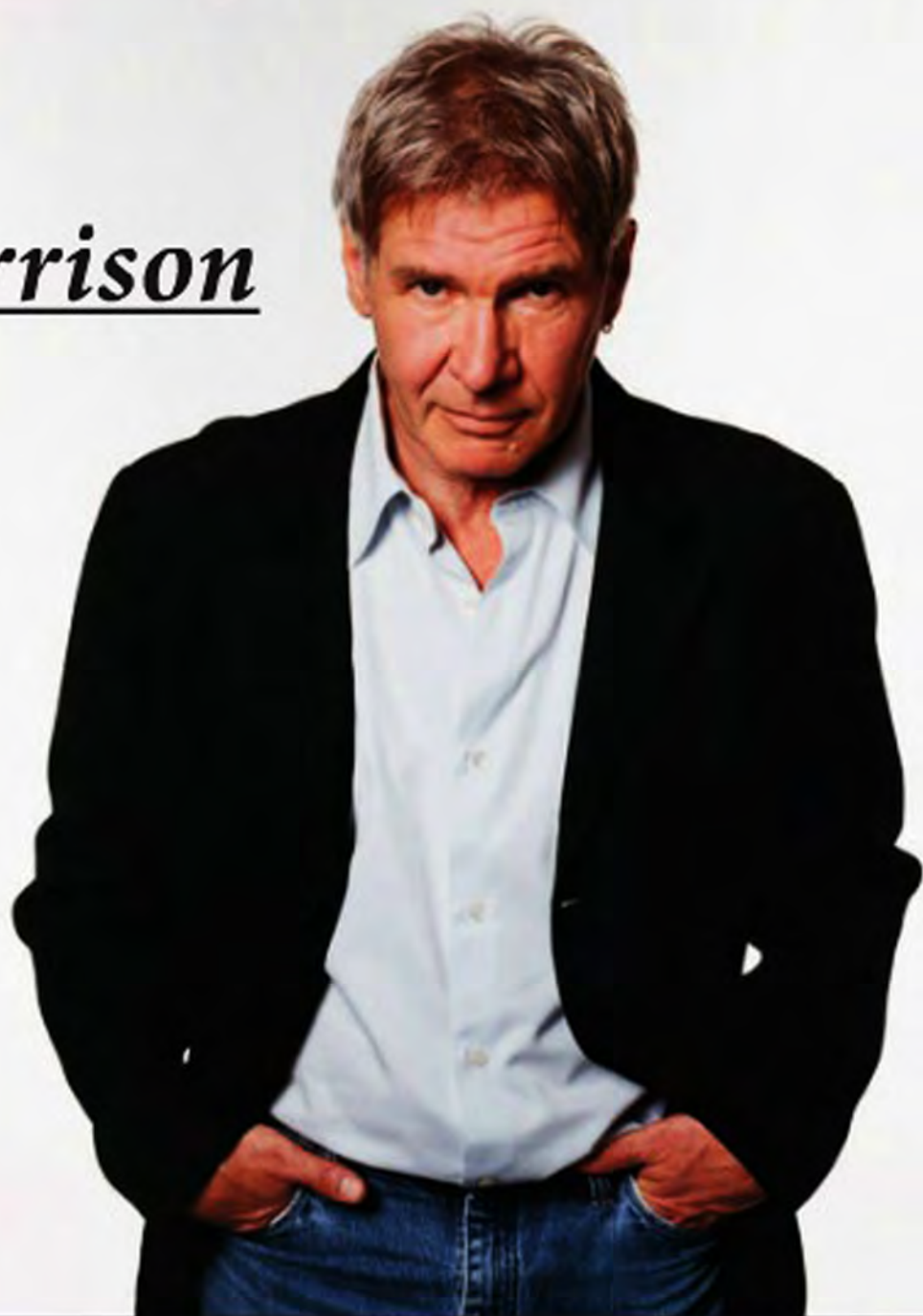


## Harrison



**VICTORIA BECKHAM**

The Spice Girl turned businesswoman on her quest for acceptance

**SAVILE ROW**

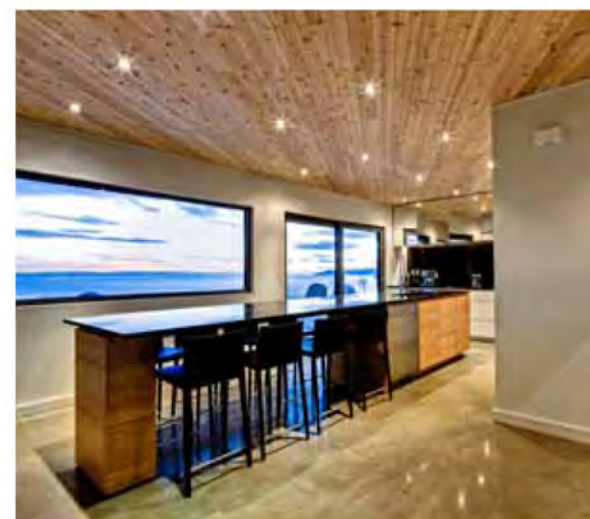
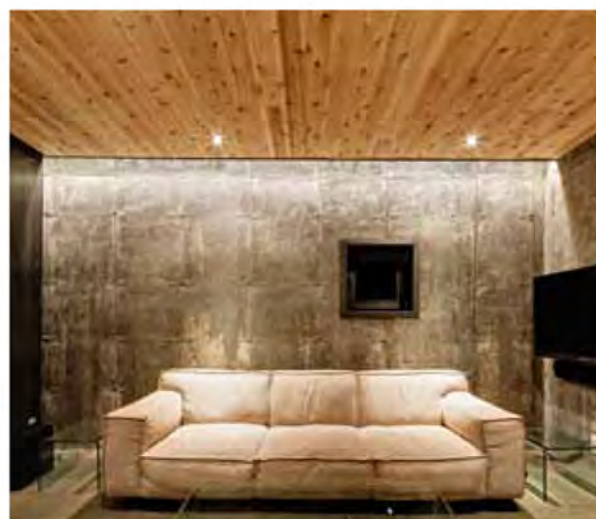
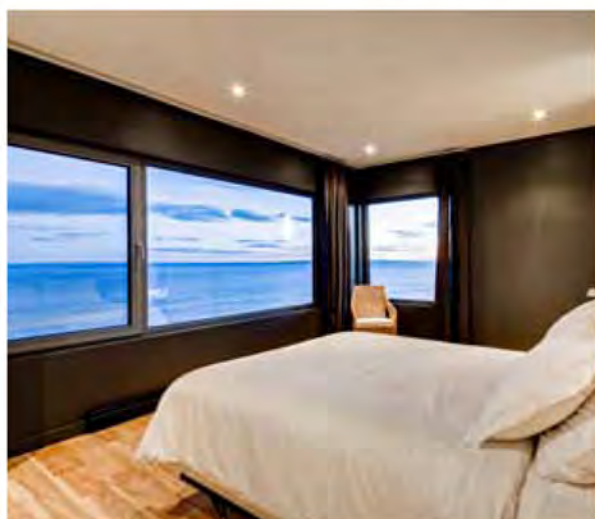
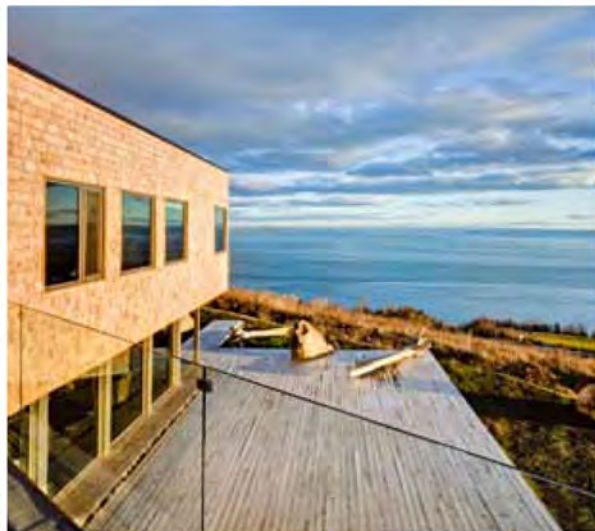
A behind-the-scenes look at London's street of sartorial elegance

**DRIVEN WILD**

John Simister can't get enough of Mercedes' newest top model

**FAIR COMMENT**

Why Beirut's fledgling Art Fair is already the talk of collectors



## Log Cabin Fever

An unlikely marriage of urban aesthetics and Montreal wilderness makes for a spectacular waterside residence

**O**n the banks of Montreal's wild St Lawrence River, against a backdrop of pine forests and craggy shoreline, Marée Basse cuts an unlikely figure. An urban alien in the natural Canadian backwoods, the building is a stark cuboid vision – a Jenga tower of giant proportions. But it won't always be so.

As the seasons pass, its bright cedar cladding will weather to a smoky hue, camouflaged amongst the forest's trunks. The grass-covered rooftop, now seeded, will flourish and spread. Nature is the boss around here, and only the foolish reckon with it – a fact that designers MU Architecture (whose work extends to Barcelona, Vienna and Dubai) are loath to forget. "We take our cues from technology, nature and mankind," says the firm. "We understand the correlation between the architectural synergy of buildings and the balance of a thriving eco-system. We aim at a complete congruity."

But while Marée Basse's shell softens, its interiors remain a pristine picture of contemporary design. Beneath that grassy rooftop you'll find two vast volumes; the entrance, an atrium bathed in natural sunlight, and a luxurious living area. Both defy their boxy exterior. This is a 3,200sqft triumph of unfussy lines, airy ceilings and a glorious synergy between natural and man-made materials.

At the heart of the house, a red metal spiral staircase is the vein that links the two spaces together. The living room, dining room and kitchen are connected to the stairs; their concrete floors and cedar ceilings constant reminders of the partnership between the house and its environs. Here, every room comes with a view. The kitchen, a functional workspace of concrete counters and large island dining areas, is lit by a floor-to-ceiling window that opens out onto the river. On the other side of the glazing, a private beach awaits; nature at its most raw, just metres from this masterpiece of modern architecture.