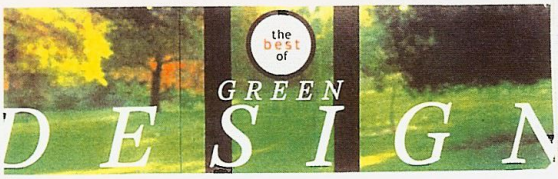
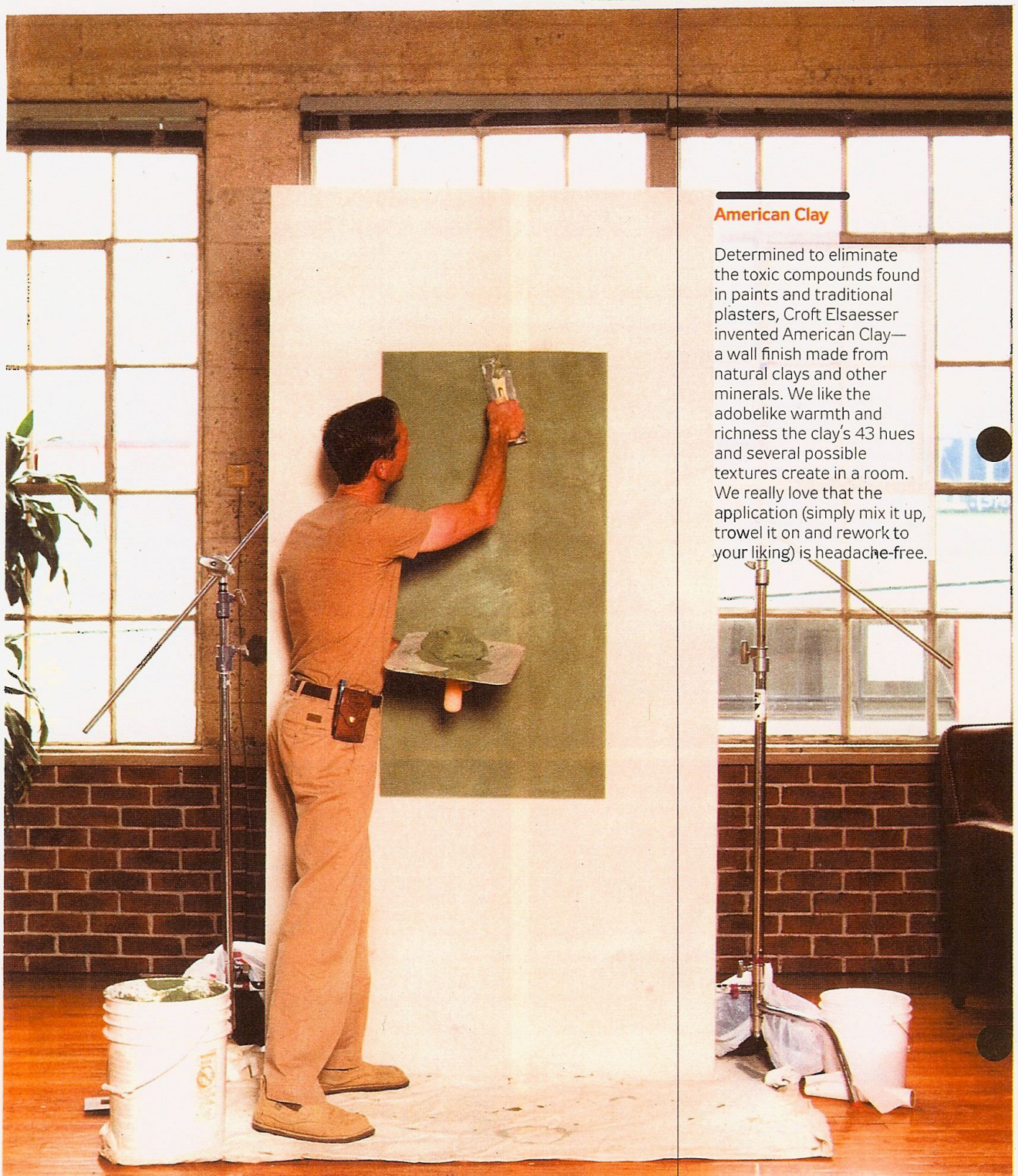
Popular Mechanics MARCH 2008



BY RENE EBERSOLE

YOUR HOME MAY BE YOUR CASTLE, but there's no need for exorbitant utility bills to make it as pricey as the real thing. From windows that can insulate against Antarctic temperatures to a machine that converts your garage into a biofuel pumping station, these pages showcase today's most ingenious products for achieving energy and water efficiency. They also feature resourceful ways to cut the amount of waste produced by constructing and furnishing your home. We combed the shelves and found lamps built from recycled car parts, countertops created with waste-coal fly ash and Adirondack chairs that were once plastic jugs. We even discovered hydrophobic concrete capable of resisting water damage from your DIY moat. Now that's our kind of engineering.



American Clay

Determined to eliminate the toxic compounds found in paints and traditional plasters, Croft Elsaesser invented American Clay—a wall finish made from natural clays and other minerals. We like the adobelike warmth and richness the clay's 43 hues and several possible textures create in a room. We really love that the application (simply mix it up, trowel it on and rework to your liking) is headache-free.