

## bright ideas department

**LIGHT IN A BOX****1 Pack Lamp**

Packaging is so often the bane of people with eco-sensitivities. Steps towards recycling and biodegradability are welcome – now Japanese designers Yoji Ishii and Kojima Jyunichi (of Rock, Paper, Scissors) have gone one better, creating the Flat Pack Lamp. The box becomes the lampshade, leaving nothing to throw away. Industrial designer Ishii, who worked at Mitsubishi Electric after graduation, considers “creating forms in order to construct worldviews is very important design work”. [www.r-p-s.jp](http://www.r-p-s.jp)

**SLEEP LIKE A BIRDIE****2 Snug Chair**

If you want to be a bird, try Alvin Tjitrowirjo's Snug Chair. Egg-shaped moulded fibreglass is upholstered with padded aniline leather, creating a cosy nest for fatigued bird lovers. The chair rests on a polished aluminium stopper, which can be removed to convert the lounge chair to a rocker. A graduate of RMIT University's industrial design school, Tjitrowirjo is a member of the Melbourne Movement and is working for a design company in Indonesia. [www.melbourne-movement.org](http://www.melbourne-movement.org)

**SEE THROUGH WALLS****3 Light-Transmitting Concrete**

Hungarian inventors brought us the helicopter, the ballpoint pen and the silent match. Now architect Aron Losonczy has produced light-transmitting concrete, made from embedding optical fibres in fine concrete that can be produced as prefabricated building blocks and panels. In theory, Losonczy says, a wall a couple of metres thick could be built from LITraCon, as the fibres work “almost without any loss in light” up to 20 metres. The weight-bearing material can be produced in a variety of sizes with insulation also embedded. [www.litracon.hu](http://www.litracon.hu)

Pip Cummings

## on the table



Steamy spas ... Persian paradise ... and English rose hybrids.  
Reviews by **Genevieve Swart**.

The 2000-year-old spa tradition is enjoying a comeback – but where Roman soldiers took the waters to treat battle-weary bones, now it's stress that has us aching for a thermal dip. **Spa: The Sensuous Experience** (Images Publishing Group, \$69.95), by architect Robert Henry and design expert Julie Taylor, features 50 of the world's most luxurious resorts, including the Daintree Eco Lodge and Spa, where rain showers and warm mud wraps are all in a day's relaxation. The photographs are enticing – you can almost feel the steam rising off hot springs in Iceland – and pampering comes in many forms, from a rose-petal and milk bath in India to a cleansing (but possibly tickly) hay bath in Austria. Relaxing in a mere bubble bath after work won't seem quite the same.

Penelope Hobhouse combines a love of gardens, history and travel in a book about Persia's paradise gardens and their influence on modern designs. Journeying to Iran to research **Gardens of Persia** (Cassell Illustrated, \$49.95), the author finds an arid land where gardens were once purely functional – “desert oases, fenced to keep out drifting sands, as well as human and animal marauders” – and explores the ruins of Pasargadae, built by Cyrus the Great more than 2500 years ago. She traces trends through the ages, examining how water, architecture, plants and religion conspire to turn a garden into a spiritual refuge. It's fascinating but hard to follow: if only the book's structure were as simple as that of the ancient gardens.

The splendidly illustrated **The English Roses** (Conran Octopus, \$75) is a treat for enthusiasts. Britain's David Austin has been breeding rose hybrids for 60 years, growing more than 800 varieties at a family business in Shropshire. In this catalogue of blooms, Austin shares trade secrets, discussing everything from breeding programs to the art of fragrance.

Photo: Natalie Boog

Tables from Space