

KITCHEN ISSUE

House Beautiful

MAY 2007

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OF THE YEAR!**

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FOR EVERY
STYLE**

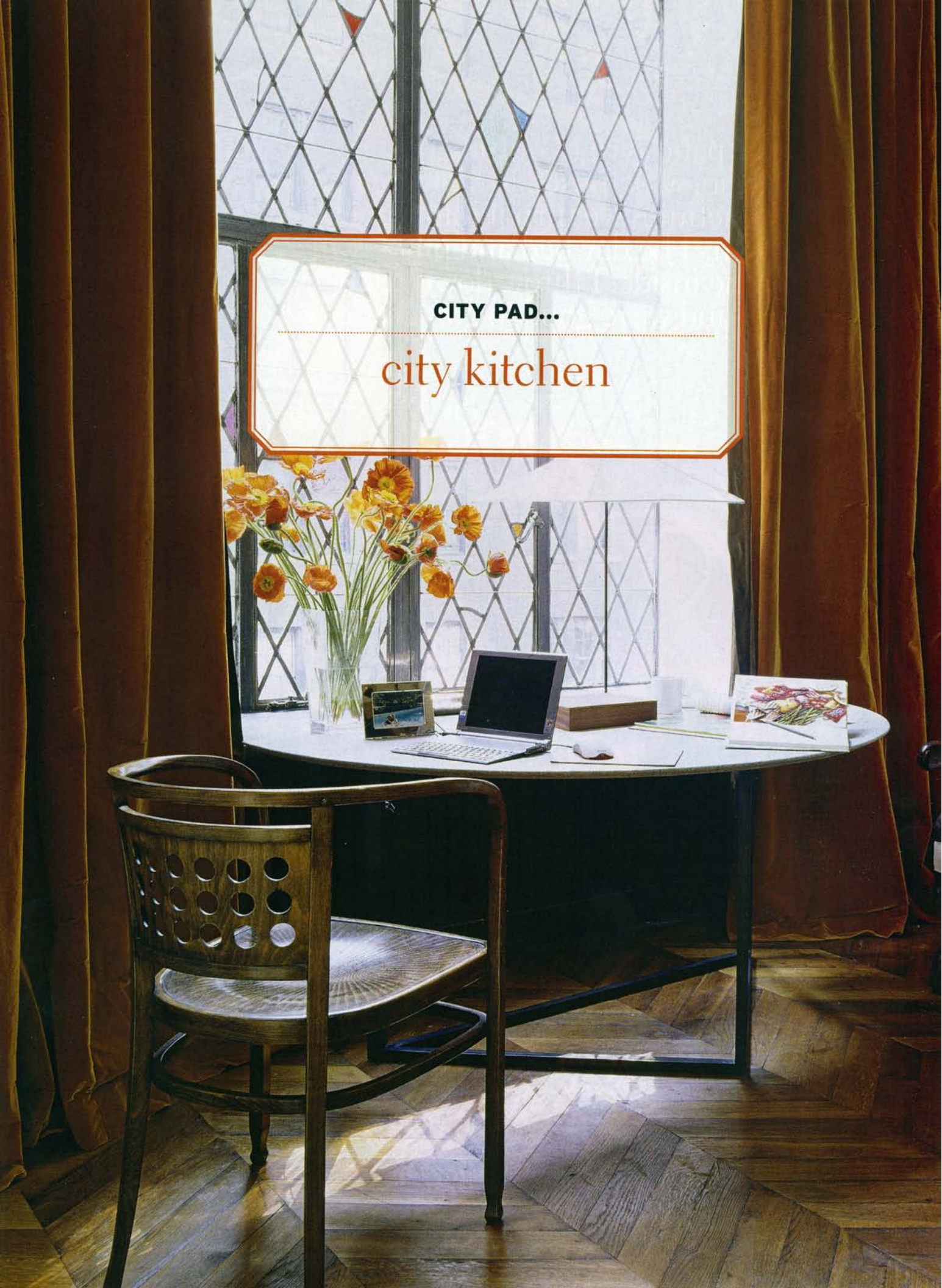
**THE BAREFOOT
CONTESSA'S
NEW APARTMENT**

details!
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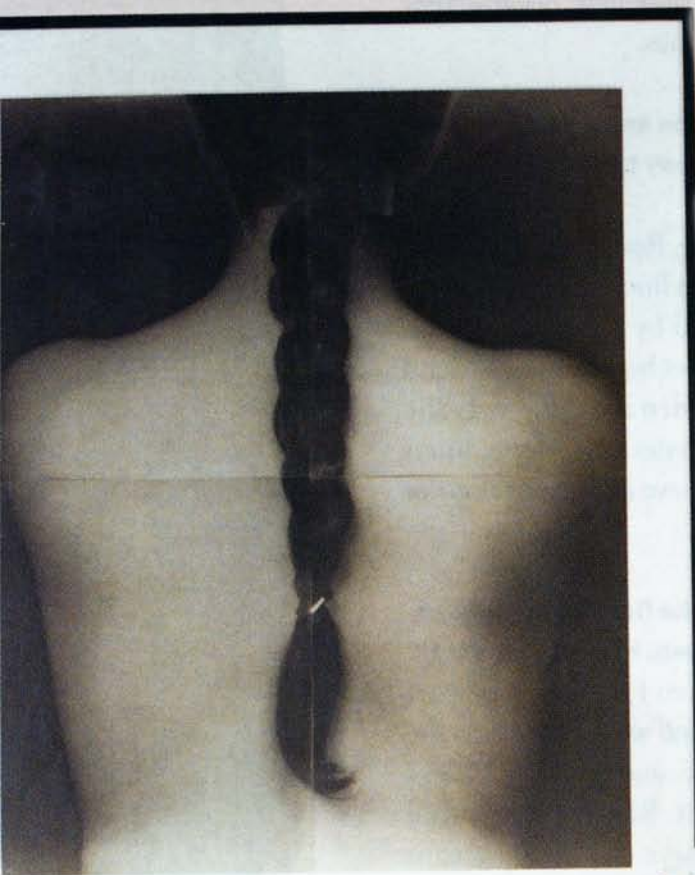
CITY PAD...

city kitchen



Ina Garten, a.k.a. the Barefoot Contessa, in her Manhattan living room. The photograph over the mantel is a silver and graphite print by Hiromitsu Morimoto, through Bloom.

OPPOSITE: The 1902 armchair by Otto Wagner seems as modern as the stone-and-steel demilune table, from Luca & Co. The silk velvet curtains in Pain Brulé by Prelle are lined in copper-colored silk by Rogers & Goffigon. Lamp from Lucca & Co.



CHRISTINE PITTEL: You've found one of those rare, operatically tall New York apartments—a 1920s one-bedroom duplex with a double-height living room and that magnificent leaded glass window.

INA GARTEN: I walked in the front door and saw that window and turned to the real estate agent and said, 'I'll take it.' It was basically that quick.

You've got the greatest luxury, volume. But a tall, narrow space can be tricky to furnish. Everything has to be of a certain scale. Lots of little things would look ditzy. When I travel, I like to shop. I found two sofas that I liked in Belgium. I knew they had to be highbacked, because of the volume. I found a coffee table I liked, so I bought it. Then I put it all into the apartment, and it was just horrible. I had the sofas near the window and a library table by the bookcase, and it felt like two rooms. I wanted to throw it all out and start over. Then I was here with a friend and he started moving furniture around, and literally ten minutes later I thought, Oh my god, it's done.

For me, it's a little like your food. If you start with a few good ingredients, like those sofas, you can't go wrong.

They feel like a cozy little room within a room, don't they?

This may be the one apartment in New York without any overstuffed furniture.

I like a sofa that sits like a chair. I'm short, so if a sofa is too deep I feel like a little girl with my feet sticking out. These are comfortable, but not too cushy. If it's too cushy you start falling asleep.

The bookcase is very unusual, with those big slots for shelves that turn a necessity into the most interesting part of the design.

I first saw it in Axel Vervoordt's antiques shop in Belgium. It's a copy of a 16th-century English bookcase that they make in any size. Axel is the most extraordinary designer I've ever met in my life. Very inspiring. For example, when I bought those little white pots that are now on the mantel, I picked two and asked, Should I buy a third? And he said, No—find something personal to put with them. And I thought, that's why Axel's interiors work, because they have soul. He taught me how to mix modern and antique things. It's the

really old things that work best, because they have much cleaner lines.

Like all good cooks, you know when to stop, before you add too many things and muddy the flavors.

I like to keep it simple. Really, I'm a modernist at heart. I like clean lines and clean colors. I was very influenced by a woman named Nicole de Vesian. I met her through a friend whose house and garden she designed. She worked in just four materials—stone, linen, leather, and wood. I have a little envelope of articles about her.

I'm surprised to see the Barefoot Contessa in a small galley kitchen. How does it work?


Let's just say that when I bought this apartment, I told my husband we could just fix the kitchen, paint it white, and move in. Then I talked to my architect, Richard Lewis, and he said, Total gut job. We did a really streamlined kitchen with a cooktop, an under-the-counter refrigerator and freezer, a dishwasher, huge drawers. In a funny way, I actually like a smaller kitchen. It's much more efficient. I tend to like things spare anyway. I can't stand clutter. I like one set of regular china, one set of good china, and that's it. I still have my wedding china from 40 years ago. Ginori, white with a gold rim. It's simple, and it makes food look good.

What did you choose for the countertops?

Belgian stone, with all these little fossils in it. I like that it's kind of messy to start with, so if something leaves a ring, who cares? I've been in houses where the countertop was more important than the people working there, where the sofa was more important than the people sitting on it, and I'm very clear that people are more important than the countertop.

Garten found the early-18th-century sofa, along with a 19th-century copy, at Jean-Philippe Demeyer Antiques in Belgium. Both are covered in Belgian linen. Pillows by Dransfield & Ross. A length of yellow silk from May Vervoordt will eventually upholster that Louis XIII chair, from Amy Perlin. The slate coffee table is by Axel Vervoordt. The rug is by Christian Liaigre. Paint color on walls is Slipper Satin by Farrow & Ball.



A photograph of a living room. On the left, a window with a diamond-patterned leaded glass is partially covered by heavy, burnt-orange velvet curtains. Below the window is a light-colored sofa with several pillows. To the right of the sofa is a white armchair with a yellow blanket draped over its back. In the foreground, a dark coffee table holds a tray of white candles, a book, and a small black pot. On the right side of the room, a white fireplace mantel is decorated with small white vases. A framed picture hangs on the wall above the fireplace. The room has white walls and a wooden floor.

“Are you utterly fearless, or did you consider a dozen other colors for those curtains?”

“There was no question in my mind. I wanted pumpkin-colored velvet curtains. I don’t know why. I’ve just always wanted them.”

The table is set with Garten's favorite stemware, Cristallerie La Rochère in the Amité pattern. Bronze candlesticks by Ted Muehling. OPPOSITE TOP: The pumpkin-colored tablecloth looks like iridescent silk, but can go straight into the washing machine. From May Vervoordt. Linen napkins by ABH Design. Slat-backed chairs from Axel Vervoordt. OPPOSITE BELOW: The bookcase by Axel Vervoordt is so flexible that it becomes an ever-changing collage.



You have this way of making people feel instantly comfortable. What's the secret?

When people come to your house, you don't ever want them to feel that you've been cooking for three days. You want them to feel like this is just something you whipped up and come on, we're having a party. And decorating is like that, too. You don't want people to feel, Oh, don't touch that. You want them to feel, Oh, just sit anywhere and put your feet up.

Is there any hope for people like me, who love the idea of entertaining but get so stressed out, trying to make it perfect?

Entertaining should be about having fun, as opposed to, Oh my god, why did I do this and who are these people? There was something I read when I was first married that I've never forgotten—If you spend the entire day making dinner for your husband, he can't possibly appreciate it enough, and it's not his fault, it's yours. And that's true for your friends. I actually think it's counter-intuitive, that the most important thing you can do for friends, to make them feel special, is to give them your attention. My whole goal is never to leave the table.

How on earth do you manage that?

Everything is done before they get there. Because I think if you're worried about what's going on in the kitchen, people sense that. I don't care what I serve, as long as people feel like I'm not doing anything. It could just be roast chicken. At the end of the day, isn't that what everybody wants for dinner anyway? The truth is, I've had more experience than most people, but I'm not really a trained cook. I still make little notes for myself—at 5 P.M., do this. At 5:30, do that. I just think the more organized I am, the more relaxed I'll be when people show up and the more fun we'll have. I'll give you my recipe for Ginger Chicken. You just marinate it overnight, put it in the oven, and you're done. Ginger chicken, roast carrots, and basmati rice. You'll be shocked at how easy it is.





A Bosch dishwasher, a Liebherr refrigerator, and a Sub-Zero freezer are tucked beneath the countertop, made of Petit Granit, a Belgian stone. The goosenecked Easton Classic faucet makes it easy to fill large pots, and Garten likes the polished nickel finish because it looks like old silver. OPPOSITE: Viking's Designer Series wall oven fits under a Wolf cooktop. The wood floor was painted to simulate stone by Jeff Rockwell.



WHY WE LOVE IT

OPEN SHELVES "It's a small space, and upper cabinets would have made it feel too closed in. The chunky wood gives some heft to the shelves and adds a lot of warmth. There's a groove along the back of each shelf so I can tilt up my hotel silver platters."

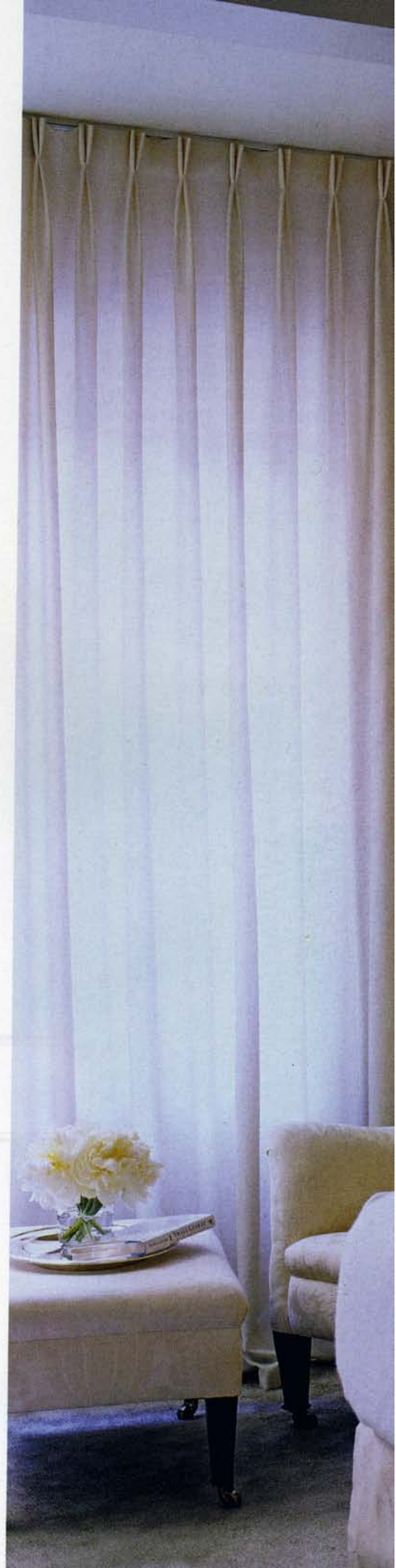
CLEAN LINES "A regular range would have stuck out beyond the countertop and broken the line, so I opted for a cooktop and a wall oven, which I installed under the counter."

BIG, WIDE DRAWERS "I just think they look more modern, and they're roomy enough for a big roasting pan."



“You’ve covered everything in the bedroom, even the walls, with creamy white fabric.”

“I wanted it to feel like a cocoon. There’s something about a city apartment that makes me want to bunker in. Having some padding behind the fabric on the walls makes it even quieter. And I wanted a big white marble bathroom, like you’d find in a great hotel suite.”



The layers of cream-on-cream in the bedroom begin with the walls, covered in Triple Crème by Rogers & Goffigon. The curtains are Pastis, by Rogers & Goffigon, and the headboard is upholstered in Great Plains Ocean's Eleven, by Holly Hunt. The silk carpet is from Beauvais. Chair and ottoman from Jean-Philippe Demeyer Antiques. Lamp from Crate and Barrel. Cable throw from Yarnz.

OPPOSITE: In the master bath, Calacatta marble sets off the Exeter pedestal sink and the Crystal Rectangular tilting mirror, both by Waterworks.

FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES.

