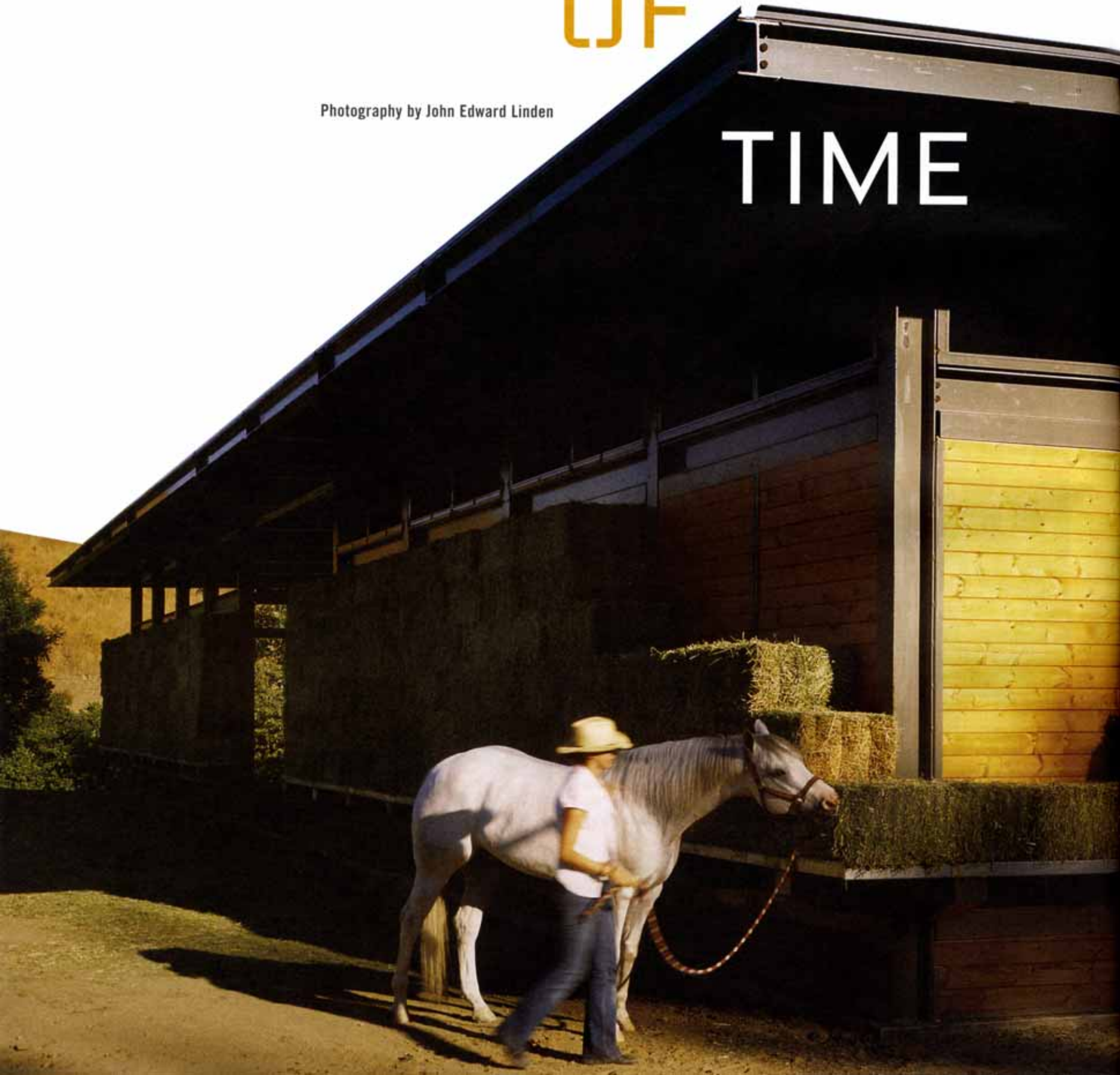


A MEASURE OF

Photography by John Edward Linden

TIME



By Jade Chang

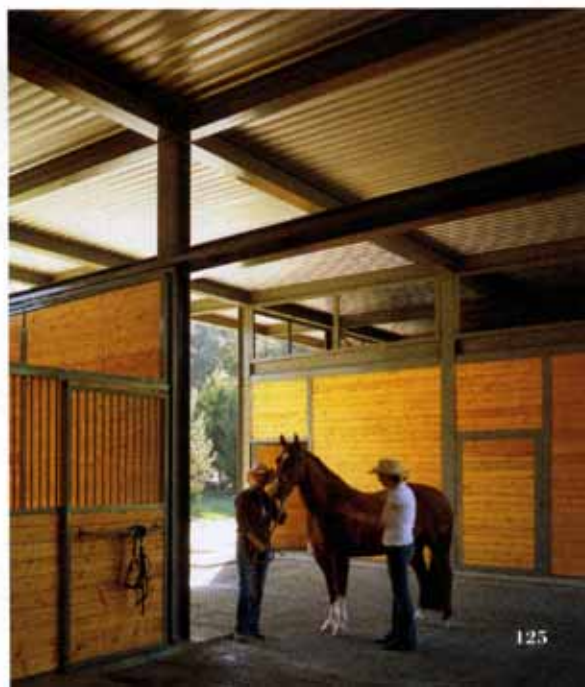
When L.A.-based architect Zoltan Pali started to design a hay barn for the Lucky Dog Ranch, in Somis, California, he wasn't thinking about Japanese philosophy or architectural expressions of time. He was just looking for a way to store hay that didn't involve a traditional big red barn. Pali's solution: turn the barn inside out.

In this cedar-and-steel structure with a simple shed roof, the hay becomes the walls. Instead of the traditional loft, bales are stacked on an exterior ledge that runs around the barn. The building changes color as the bales weather, turning from the fresh-cut green that is fed to the horses to a dry yellow used only for bedding. When hay runs low, wood walls are revealed; then a new shipment arrives, and the hay walls are stacked up all over again.

"It was not until the actual process of stacking the hay on the building that it all came crashing down on me," Pali says. "The smell of it, the roughness of it, the imperfection. The sense of the passage of time and even the passage of my own life had me crying—sobbing." The beauty of imperfection and impermanence is at the center of *wabi sabi*, a centuries-old Japanese philosophy that is less a system of formal tenets and more a consciousness of the surrounding world. "To cherish and understand, even in a small way, what wabi sabi is and then to express it through my work is extremely important to me," Pali says.

Poetic in its simplicity, the hay barn embodies that philosophy. "It talks about the softness and hardness of our world and of our lives; the sense that things are constantly born and reborn," Pali explains. He isn't sure that the barn's owner appreciates that: "He finds it more an oddity, a fun show," Pali says. According to him even the jurors of the 1999 Progressive Architecture awards, given to an earlier design for the barn, "mostly got it as a humorous thing."

"When you boil down the idea of the project, the structure turns out to be the simplest thing you could ever do—but it also really starts approaching the notion of expressing time within architecture," Pali believes. It is the life cycle of the hay played out on the barn walls. He says, "We started appreciating the fact that our buildings will change and decay over time." www.metropolismag.com



In an L.A. architect's modern barn, storing hay becomes a symbolic act.



A simple, steel-frame barn (left) by Zoltan Pali stores hay on an exterior ledge (far left). The interior contains four horse stables. Above: the barn is shown in (1) elevation, (2) floor plan, and (3) section.