

# VOGUE

DEC

## naughty but nice

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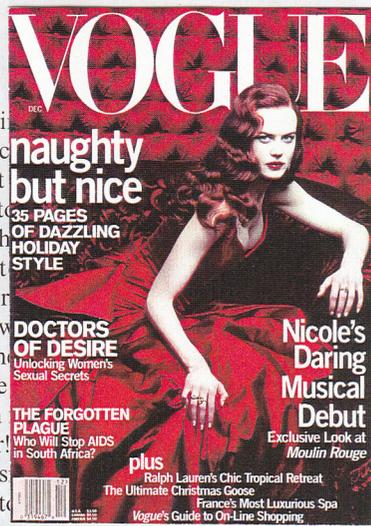
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# People are Talking about

Not that every director has walked away a Binoche fan, which is perhaps a credit to her passion for her craft; she was famously replaced on the set of *Lucie Aubrac* after artistic disagreements over dialogue with French director Claude Berri, who later told a French newspaper, "It's my film; it's my life." Meanwhile, she found her collaboration with Anthony Minghella, the director of *The English Patient*, fruitful, as did the Academy, which awarded her the best Supporting Actress Oscar for her portrayal of Hana, a Canadian nurse with a wounded soul. Ditto her work with Krzysztof Kieslowski, the director of *Blue*, for which she won the Best Actress award at the 1993 Venice International Film Festival.

After a short time spent with Binoche, it comes as no surprise that she has always wanted to be in stage and film and that she can remember the precise moment that she resolved to do so—

a moment that occurred in her production of Ionesco ("Exit the King"). And it was a decision to go back in time to her production. The young Binoche, in her costumes, the sets; she acted, she remembered. "I didn't direct, and I didn't know how to direct the play was over, when she called her mother, young Juliette there," Binoche says, "in what I want to do. Theater! Theater! Theater!" Binoche says, her sister says, "I think she was a little asto-



## space innovator

It's a bed! It's an ottoman! It's Robert Kirkbride's versatile new furniture line, ideal for anyone in a tight squeeze.

Robert Kirkbride doesn't just talk theory when it comes to living well in precious spaces. Like many New Yorkers, he *lives* it.

With his new furniture line, Studiolo, the soft-spoken Philadelphia native shows he cares less about making style statements than creating versatile rooms that accommodate a city dweller's demands. Sitting in the oversize kitchen-dining area of the three-room loft he shares with his composer wife,

Kirkbride describes his multifunctional furniture as "tools for tailoring a room, not ornamentation." And while his designs have an obvious modern appeal, Kirkbride thinks his pieces can work with any sensibility. Indeed, he believes in leaving a "light footprint" in his clients' psychological space.

"I'm building an instrument that people can tune themselves," the slender, bearded architect says of his collection. "You can really play with the geometry—the angles and proportions—and tie pieces together in totally different configurations."

Proving that necessity can also be the mother of design, Kirkbride's metamorphosing furniture allows his own much-reconfigured rooms to serve as both a professional and personal haven. The Possum, for instance, an ingenious multipart sofa, stores linens in its oversize ottoman; joined together, the sections become a queen-size bed. A

## design

hardware-free acrylic Open Café Table easily breaks down and stores flat. A sturdy birchwood stepladder, the Ceci StairChair, unfolds to seat just one more guest.

His studio, a serenely sleek space—where Kirkbride is finishing his doctoral dissertation, designs apartments, and runs his furniture business—gave life to his mantras of "transparency" and "transformability." The century-old loft first housed a furrier's shop and later an alternative school of architecture. Sculptor Donald Judd and environmental artist Christo were among those who hosted salons in what is now the Studiolo showroom.

A former designer for POLO/Ralph Lauren Home, the 33-year-old Kirkbride began crossing the architect-designer divide while collaborating in Milan with furniture designer Antonio Citterio.

The Italian integration of art, craft, commerce, and scholarship that Kirkbride emulates was also embodied, he says, by the late Carlo Scarpa and Gio Ponti.

"What interests me, besides their sublime designs, is that architecture could be a way of living, not just a way of making a living. There isn't the division you see in the United States between being a practical architect versus a scholar versus a designer. There was no boundary to what architecture meant."

Studiolo prices range from \$300 to \$8,000.



SURFACE AREA: ROBERT KIRKBRIDE'S NEW STUDIO INFUSED WITH NATURAL LIGHT.

ALLISON ANDERSON *pata* ▶ 252