

METROPOLITAN DETROIT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

HOUR

DETROIT



Downtown Living

HOME SECTION

REGENERATION: FROM A MANSION TO CITY LOFTS AND BOB-LO CONDOS

DIA'S NEW LEADER

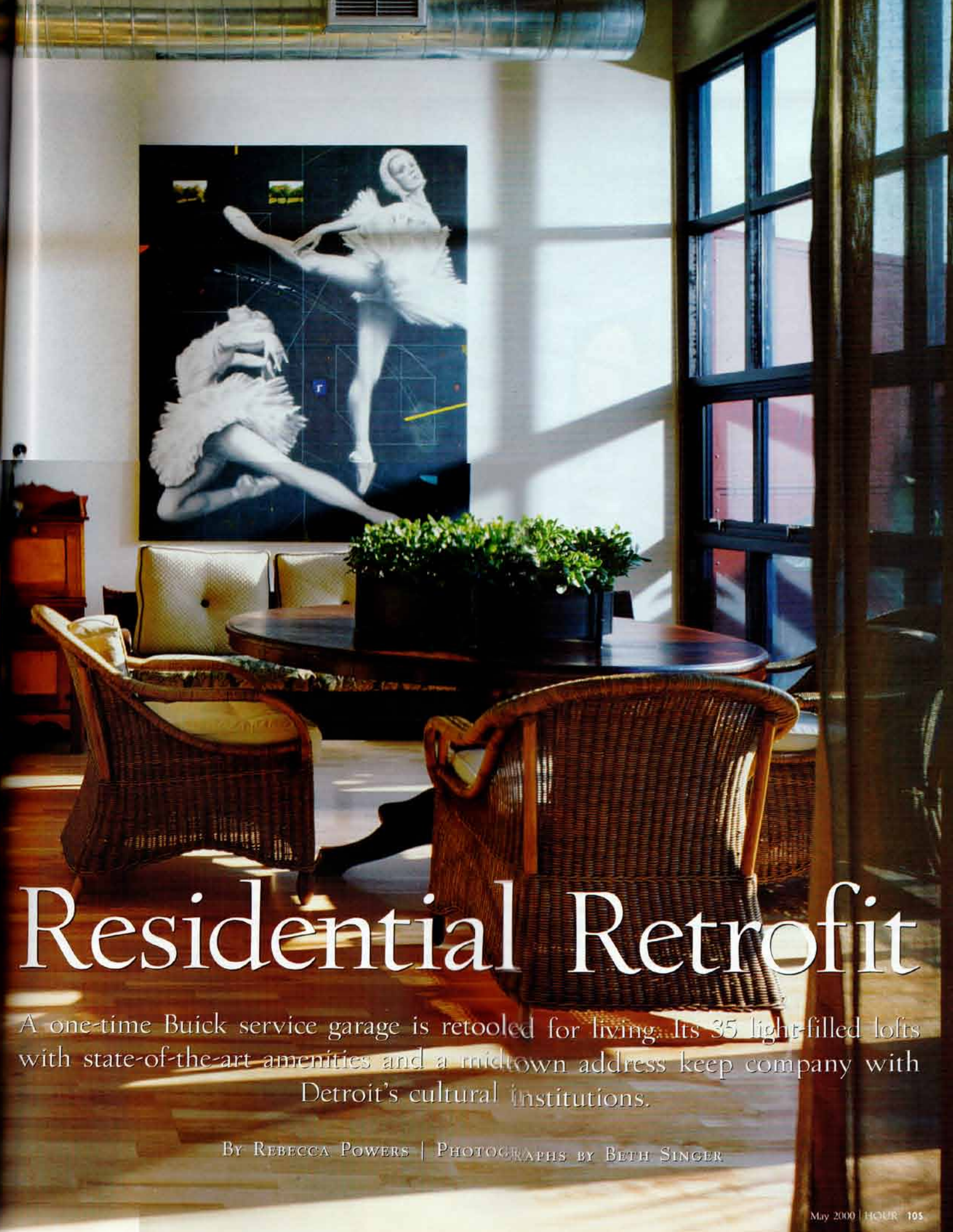
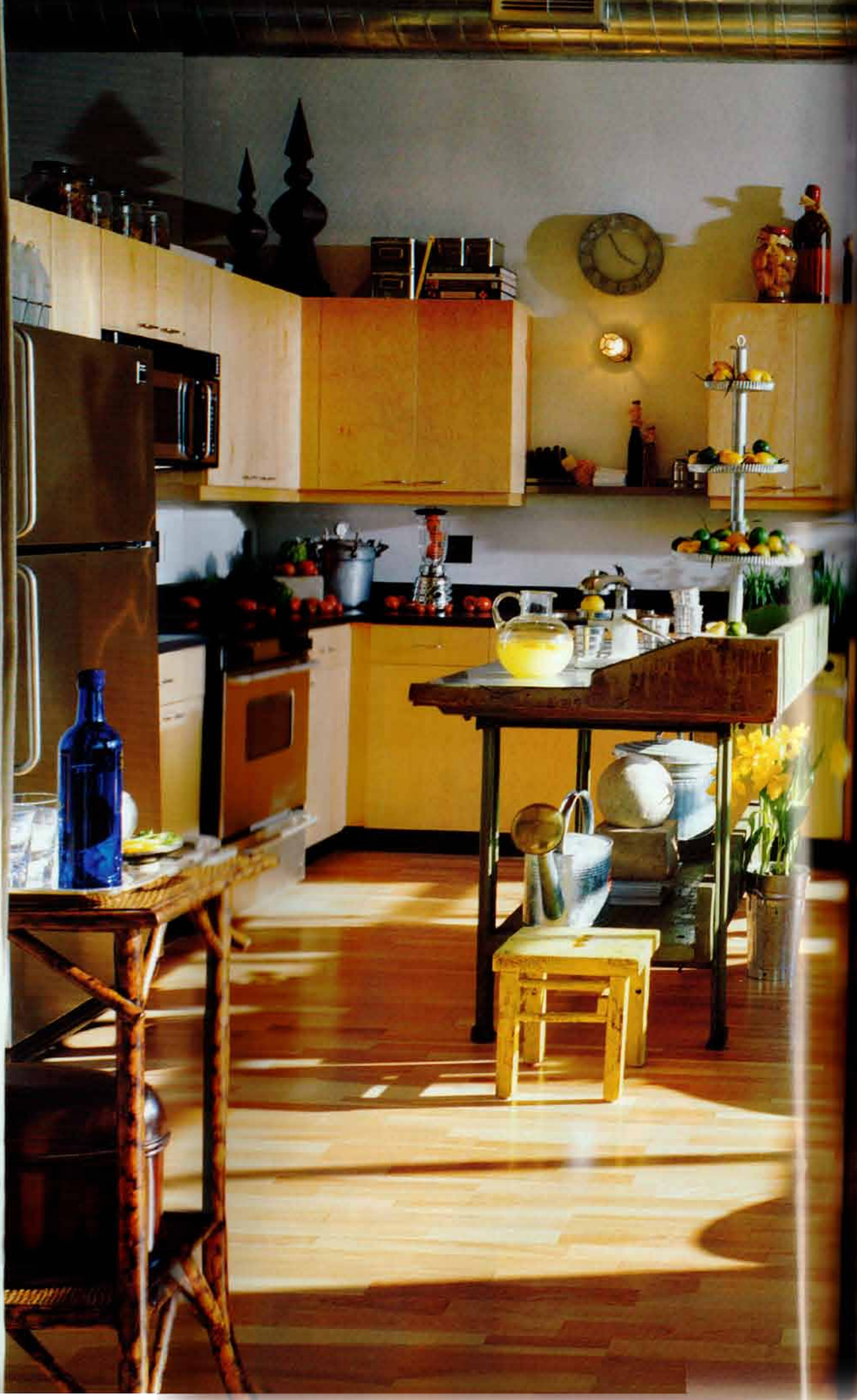
GRAHAM BEAL TALKS ABOUT PLANS FOR BUFFING UP AND BEEFING UP THE MUSEUM

ALBERT KAHN

THE MAN BEHIND THE BLUEPRINTS — AND HIS LASTING IMPRINT ON DETROIT

\$3 MAY 2000





Residential Retrofit

A one-time Buick service garage is retooled for living. Its 35 light-filled lofts with state-of-the-art amenities and a midtown address keep company with Detroit's cultural institutions.

BY REBECCA POWERS | PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETH SINGER



Insiders have long recognized the potential of Cass Corridor real estate where vintage apartments with three bedrooms, bay windows, sitting rooms and built-ins are architectural bargains. And large-scale commercial spaces stand ripe for rediscovery.

J.C. Cataldo, lead developer of the new Canfield Lofts, was among the core that saw the potential of one such structure, a former Buick service garage.

"The building has history," Cataldo says. "It was there prior to the Depression."

The 1921-era building also has a neighborhood. Just across the street from the Traffic Jam & Snug restaurant, the Canfield Lofts keep company with Orchestra Hall, the Medical Center, Wayne State University, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Museum of African American History, the Center for Creative Studies and restaurants, including the Whitney, Duet, Mario's, the Majestic, Union Street and

Twingo's. "You could live in the building and not have a need for a car," Cataldo says.

These lofts in the re-emerging "midtown" area just north of downtown are no rustic attempt to gentrify. They are third-generation living spaces — the result of collaboration by Cataldo and his firms, Mosher, Dolan & Cataldo Inc. and Midwest Commercial, with developer Bob Slattery and architect Mark Nickita of Archive Design Studio.

It's the technical amenities at 460 W. Canfield that help make these lofts third-generation caliber. Consider: a fire suppression sprinkler system, individual forced-air heating and air conditioning systems, low-E thermal double-pane windows with screens, telephone-entry security, remote-entry parking and smoke and heat detectors with battery backup.

With such refined assets, there's an urge to label these lofts Chicago-style, just like the urge to remake ourselves and call the Cass Corridor "midtown."

But, truly, residential lofts are becoming Detroit-style.

As a downtown building owner once laid it out, the Detroit lofts market has followed this progression: first the scouts, then pioneers, then settlers. Canfield Lofts is a settler.

When the three-story redevelopment was announced, all seven first-floor lofts sold quickly. Only nine of the 35 units remain available. (Prices vary from \$101,000 to \$241,000.)

The Canfield Lofts were designed to encourage community. Loft entrances open off interior corridors rather than via individual exterior doors. In addition to the private terraces and balconies offered in some lofts, there is a large common balcony.

Inside the lofts, where ceilings rise 11 to 13 feet, floors are finished in maple. Kitchen cabinets are crafted of the same pale hardwood. And among the features are sliding barn-style rollaway doors that serve as movable walls alternately opening up or

sequestering the sleeping quarters. The bed and bath/laundry are the only two actual rooms within the lofts, which range in size from 621 to 1,316 square feet. Their undefined floor plan invites flexible living and open-ended interior design. Birmingham-based Jeffrey King Interiors offered a sampler of ideas by decorating one of the largest lofts.

"We didn't want to make it feel like a lot of loft spaces, industrial and cold," says Richard Ross, of Jeffrey King Interiors.

Antiques lend warmth to the space and give a look that is less one-generational. An upholstered sofa bench, for example, serves a generous, round dining table, both from Watch Hill Antiques. An antique potting table works as a kitchen island. When there's a need for the illusion of walls, fabric panels of taupe-colored linen suspended from overhead tracks can be drawn.

"We wanted the space to feel like the person

entertains," Ross says. And for entertaining purposes, the coffee table sports wheels, the velvet couch opens to a guest bed.

Though the design plan is fluid, a built-in bed firmly anchors the private area. The bed, built by King Interiors, is a self-contained retreat with its own built-in TV, stereo and telephone.

King's designs beautifully showcase an inspiration drawn from — yes — cities other than Detroit. Cataldo gleaned ideas from lofts in Chicago, Portland, Cleveland and Denver. The overwhelming interest in his final result suggests a trend.

"It's an indication of what we now find important," Cataldo says. "There are so many things people can do with their free time other than their 15 hours a week in their auto."

Powers is HOUR Detroit's senior editor. E-mail: rpowers@hourdetroit.com.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

The Birmingham design team of Jeffrey King, Richard Ross and Amy Weinstein developed a soft loft look. Working on a short deadline, they created this decor with antiques, hand-crafted pieces and accessories from Target and Pier One. The result is a look that is youthful but not one-generational.

Piano: Evola Music, Bloomfield Hills; **Coffee table:** Casework's Inc., Roseville; **Piano chairs and living room floor lamp:** Arkitektura, Birmingham; **Custom art framing:** Bloomfield Frame Gallery, Royal Oak; **Custom planter wall candelabra:** Gonzalo Rodriguez, Ferndale; **Custom bed:** Gallery Steel, Waterford; **Art:** Robert Kidd Gallery, Birmingham; **Area rugs:** McLeod Carpet, Bloomfield Hills.