

# Company Seven

## Astro-Optics Division



Moderate resolution reprint of the:

## “The Twenty Best Industrial Designs Since World War II”

by Walter Dorwin Teague from the 23 May 1964 issue of the *Saturday Review* magazine. Mr. Teague lists the Questar telescope as tenth among his top twenty. This is scanned from an original copy in Company Seven’s archives about the Questar Corporation.

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# *Saturday Review*

May 23, 1964 25¢

## Design in America

ARTICLES BY

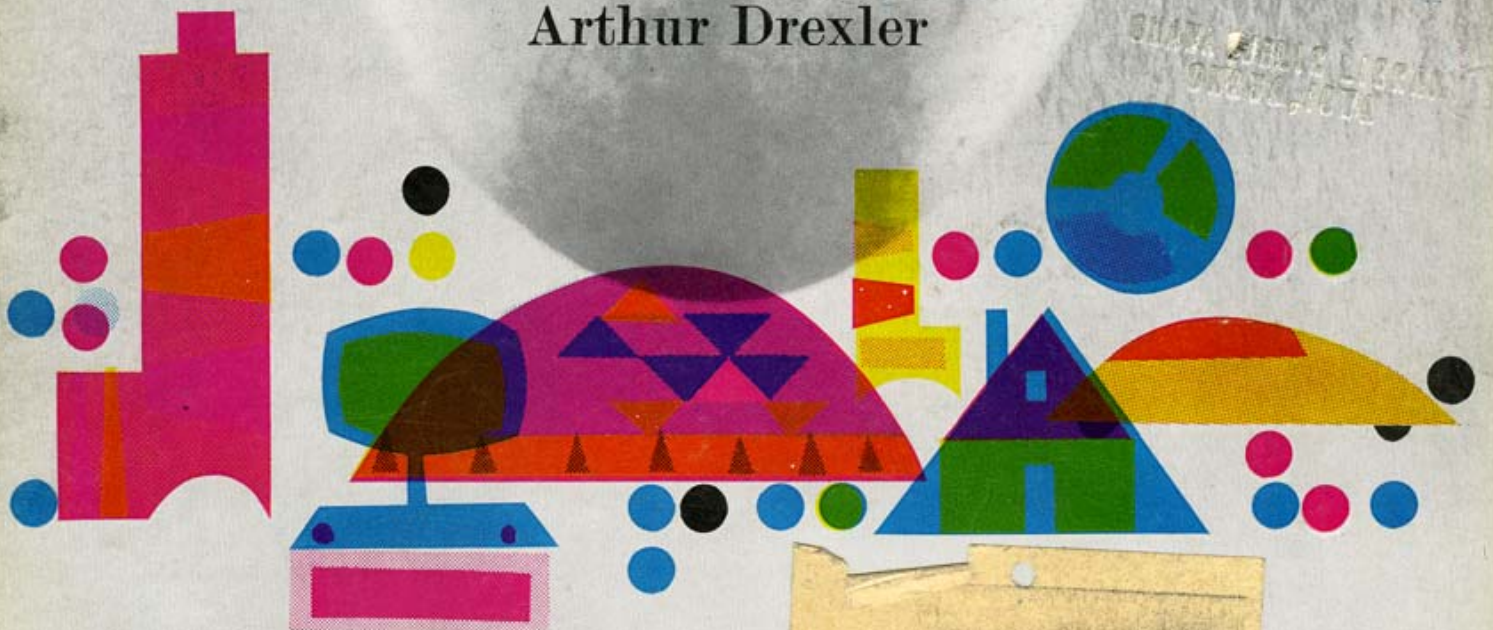
Katharine Kuh

Walter Dorwin Teague

Vincent Scully

Wolf Von Eckardt

Arthur Drexler



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# THE TWENTY BEST INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS SINCE WORLD WAR II

By WALTER DORWIN TEAGUE

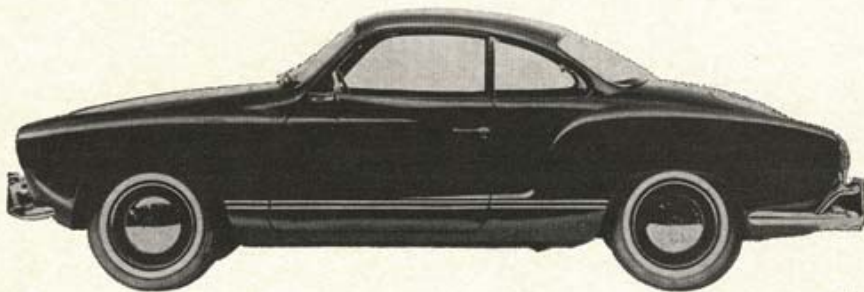
**I**N ANY ATTEMPT to pick "best designs," the biggest problem is to arrive at uniform criteria by which excellence can be measured. In most previous projects of this sort, the choice has been made by submitting ballots to any designers the organizers could talk into participating. In the present "contest," however, *SR*'s editors thought it might be interesting to see what designs one man would select. The only ground rules—and these were established solely to limit the field—were 1) that the products should have been designed since World War II and 2) that they should not exceed twenty-five. (The final number turned out to be twenty.)

In some ways it is easier to justify a choice when it is a personal one. After all, if I am asked why I've included a particular item, I can always say simply, "Well, I just like it." On the other hand, I found that picking twenty-five truly classic items designed since World War II was quite a challenge. I went along at a good clip until I got to about seventeen, and after that it got slower and stickier. There were several designs (I've maintained the order in which they occurred to me) that I put down without question. I remember, for instance, the first time I saw the Honda Model X sitting at a curb (I think it was in 1960 in Bermuda) and I knew immediately that there was a classic design and that it should be part of anybody's list. But after reaching twenty, I discovered that I was dragging items in with increasing reluctance. It seemed reasonable, therefore, to stop there.

Most designers, I suspect, keep a conscious or subconscious list of this kind. In any event, it is obviously a personal choice and, I hasten to add, not necessarily the choice of Walter Dorwin Teague Associates, or indeed of anyone else but me. In fact, I'm sure that some of my partners will disagree with some selections as violently as my competitors will.

An obvious question will be: "Why such a large percentage of sports items?" Fair question. This is partly personal preference, but mainly the result of the fact that more design talent is applied to sports articles than to anything else. Particularly in the United States, our leisure-time equipment is much more important to us than the everyday furniture of our lives. (This is why, perhaps, some business executives will spend considerably more time, thought, and effort in improving their golf games than in improving the techniques of their businesses.)

In any event, here are my choices:



1.

**1. Karmann Ghia Coupe:** This is a pretty obvious candidate for anyone's list. (The VW beetle is out by the ground rules—designed before World War II.) The Ghia looks just as good today, nine years later, as when it first came out.

**2. Head Skis:** A fashionable saying in America is, "We're pretty good when it comes to cheap mass production but you have to go back to the old country to get real craftsmanship." "Heads" are designed in the U.S. and built in the U.S. and, in spite of U.S. labor costs, high prices, and high duties, sell like hotcakes in Switzerland, Austria, and elsewhere.

**3. Scott Ski Poles:** Ask any good skier, whether he is French, German, Austrian, Swiss, or American, what he considers the best ski poles. He'll say "Scotty's" every time. To a non-skier this is hard to understand. They say, "What can you design in a ski pole? It's just a shaft, a strap, and a basket. Besides, those Scott things look sort of clumsy anyway." The racing skier says, "O.K., pick it up and wiggle it back and forth. [It's like wiggling a light straw.] Now look at the grip; it's got finger grips, a heavy pommel to improve the grip and lessen injuries, and it's canted forward so that when I make a slalom turn I don't have to cock my wrist as far. It's stronger than other poles and the basket is more rugged and easily replaceable. Notice the strap; it's adjustable so that I can get it to give just the right amount of support." In the five years since Scott decided to go into the pole business in Sun Valley, he has become the most copied pole manufacturer purely by fine, intelligent design and good, honest workmanship.

**4. Triton Sloop:** When I first walked into the 1959 boat show I had no idea of buying a new boat. Among the sailboats was a twenty-eight-foot fiberglass sloop called the Triton, made by an outfit called Pearson that no one I knew had ever heard of. I went back three times during the show, and on the fourth visit I wrote out a check for a down payment. I got Triton No. 8. Since then they have built more than 500 Tritons, a fabulous number for a cruising boat. Carl Alberg of Marblehead hit just the right combination of minimum boat with comfortable accommodations, a

fast, delightful sailer with plenty of living room that still manages to look sleek and beautiful, in the water or out.

**5. Bohn Calculator:** A typical "product design" subject for an industrial designer. You couldn't redesign it for the next year's market without spoiling it.

**6. Scott Paper Towel Rack:** Another one that looked exactly right the day it came out. Not a useless line or contour anywhere. A real classic.

**7. Honda Motorcycle:** Every detail was studied to make it harmonious. You have to see it to appreciate its excellence.

**8. Russian Single Shot Target Pistol; 9. Russian Autoloading Target Pistol:** I first saw these in the Russian Pavilion in Vienna in 1957. They're both so terrific I put them in together. Note the peculiar low barrel on the automatic; there is no recoil lifting during rapid fire.

**10. Questar Telescope:** Another answer to the person who says we can't produce fine craftsmanship in the U.S.A. Designed and built in the little Pennsylvania town of New Hope, this beautiful little telescope is the finest instrument of its kind in the world.

**11. Boston Whaler Outboard:** All honest designers and real boat lovers have reveled in the meteoric success of the Boston Whaler, brought out in 1958 when, if you didn't have tailfins on your boat, you were passé. It has steadily forged ahead in sales and is now the most widely copied boat in the world. It's beautifully and honestly constructed and, although not cheap, it's worth the price.

**12. Boeing 707:** Here is American know-how, design, and craftsmanship in an unmistakable combination.

**13. Eames Chair:** This design set a trend that is still on its way. It seems like a fairly obvious design, but it had to wait until the materials were ready for it.

**14. Olivetti Typewriter:** Another example of how the Italian designers took off after the war.



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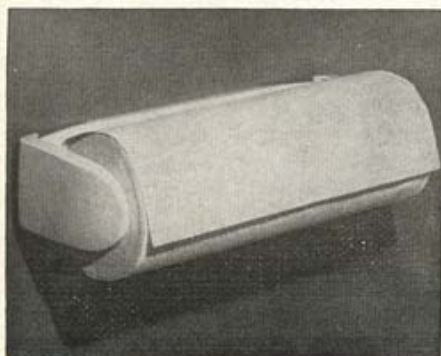
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**15. Ponti Toilet:** Those Italians again! If anyone has said thirty years ago that a toilet could be beautiful, he would have been laughed at. Well, I think it is.

**16. Singer Vacuum Cleaner:** Good design, well thought out from the "human engineering" standpoint. A fresh approach to the solution of a well-worked-over problem.

**17. Porsche 904:** Porsche cars are ugly in the opinion of many. But Porsche has never made any concession to current trends, and the factory still faithfully carries out the philosophy of "Let the form follow the function." This competition coupe is forty-two inches high, weighs about 1,400 pounds, and delivers about 180 horsepower with its four-cylinder air-cooled engine.

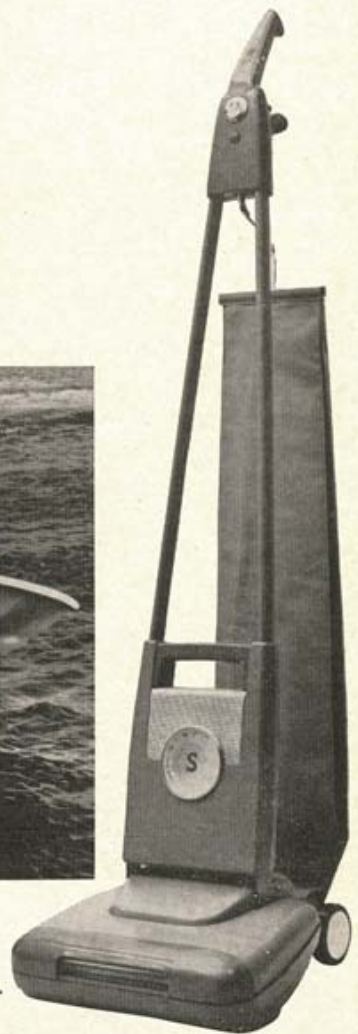
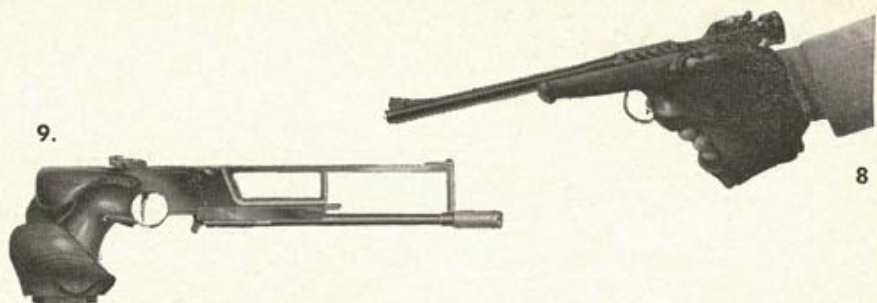
**18. Wegner Chair:** The problem with Scandinavian furniture is that there are so many good ones from which to choose. This was the inspiration for a whole school of furniture, a once-in-a-lifetime design.

**19. Ericophone:** This is a basic and clever solution to an old design problem. It's the kind of product that will grow on the user as he appreciates its convenience.

**20. Carlsberg Beer Bottle:** With all the talent that goes into packaging design, you'd think it would be easy to pick a candidate here. Not so—there have been good designs but no one so outstanding as to deserve to join the ranks of the twenty best. Just in time, Carlsberg came along with this new bottle. I think time will justify this selection.



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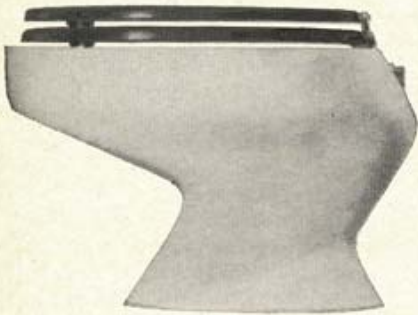
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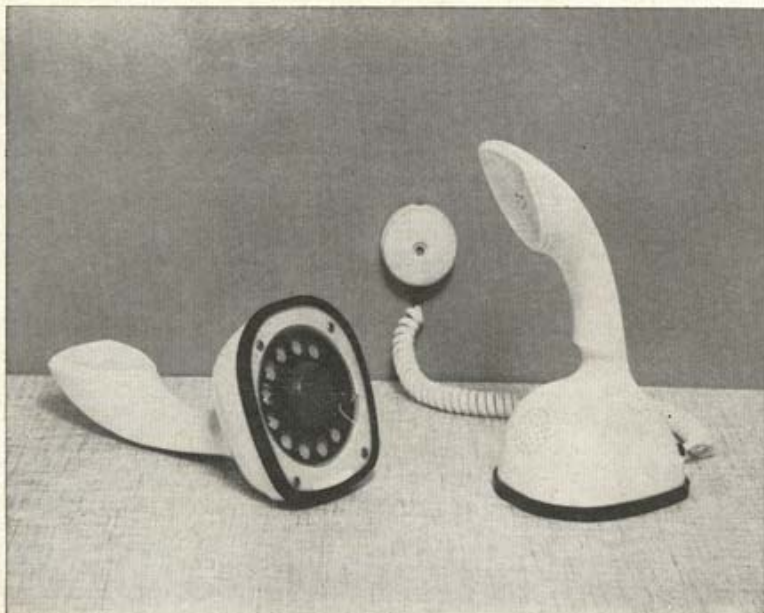
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