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DESIGN
TALENTS



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Pure Elegance



Owens desk lamp with seeded-glass globe.

LIGHT HEARTED

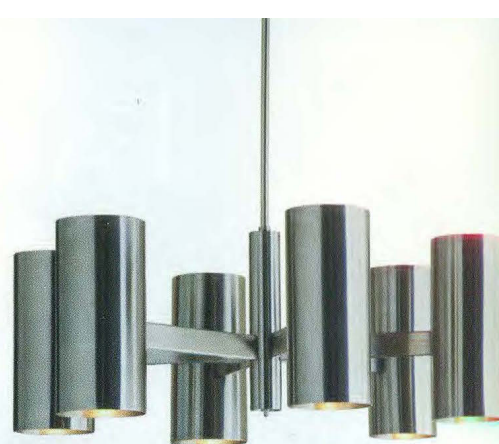
A chance discovery leads Robert Long to a new career, relaunching a lighting company that gives his father's design legacy a second life



Evergreen sconce.



Robert Long.



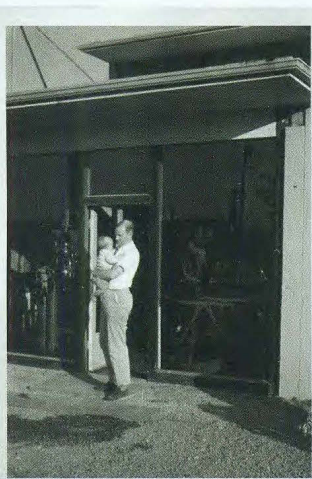
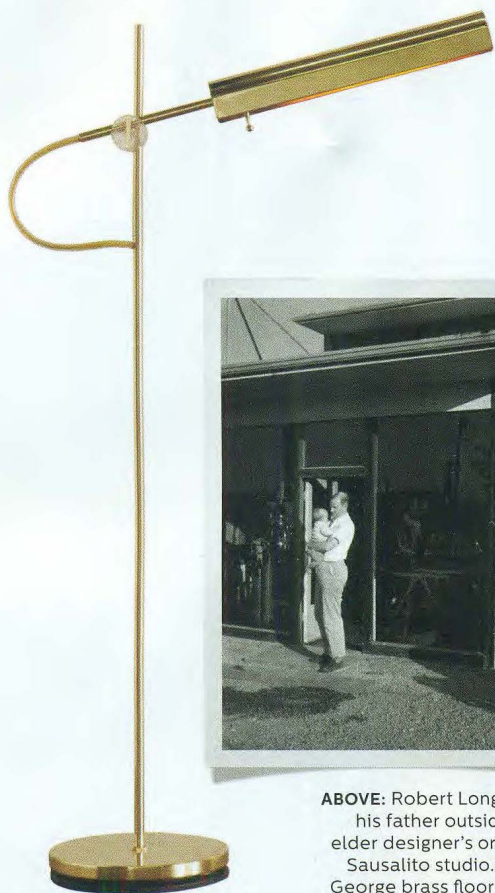
Barnes stainless steel chandelier.

spent his life restoring 18th-century Georgian houses and vintage boats and cars. He approached the job with the zeal of a born curator. "My dad gave a lot of his prototypes to my cousins, aunts, and uncles, and I took them apart to learn how they were constructed," he says.

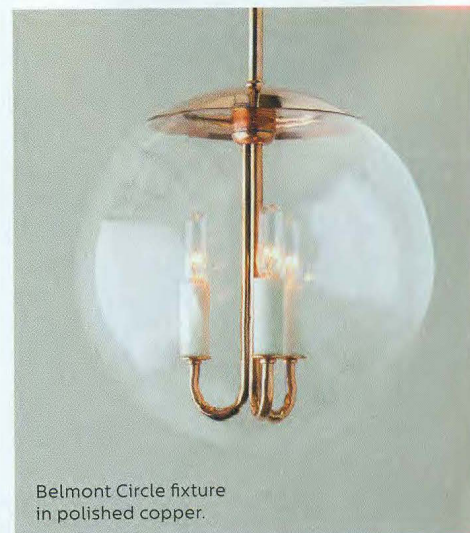
Out of a warehouse in Sausalito, just a few hundred feet from where his father launched Robert Long Lighting, the younger Long is faithfully reproducing many of the pieces in the 1967 catalog, from the shimmering, industrial-goes-mod Barnes chandelier to the minimalist George floor lamp. He is also creating new designs inspired by the originals, such as the simple yet elegant Evergreen sconce. (He has even revived the three-way switch his father pioneered, which can shed light upward, downward, or in both directions.) What's more, he continues to use many of the company's earliest vendors—glassblowers, fabricators, and machinists—all of whom are next-generation craftspeople. Says Long, "They're responsible for keeping alive my father's name, and his contribution to the lexicon of lighting design." **KATHLEEN HACKETT**

When Robert Long was just two years old, he and his older brother survived a car accident that took the life of his father, the lighting designer Robert Long, as well as his mother, his grandmother, and another brother. His father, who had struck out for California from his native Savannah, Georgia, in the early 1960s in search of a platform for his post-Bauhaus-style pieces, produced his first catalog in 1967, the same year that tragedy befell him. Thirty years later, Long was rifling through a box of family memorabilia when he came upon a copy of the catalog. Its pages were filled with industrial-meets-midcentury sconces, chandeliers, and desk lamps, notable for their blown-glass orbs and spare cylindrical bases. "That's when I knew I needed to keep his legacy alive," says the former insurance executive and psychotherapist.

Using a digitized version of the catalog as his calling card, Long presented it to architects and designers around San Francisco. "One architect immediately placed an order for a big project he was working on, which meant I had to go home and figure out how to get the lighting made," says Long, who has



ABOVE: Robert Long with his father outside the elder designer's original Sausalito studio. LEFT: George brass floor lamp.



Belmont Circle fixture in polished copper.