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30

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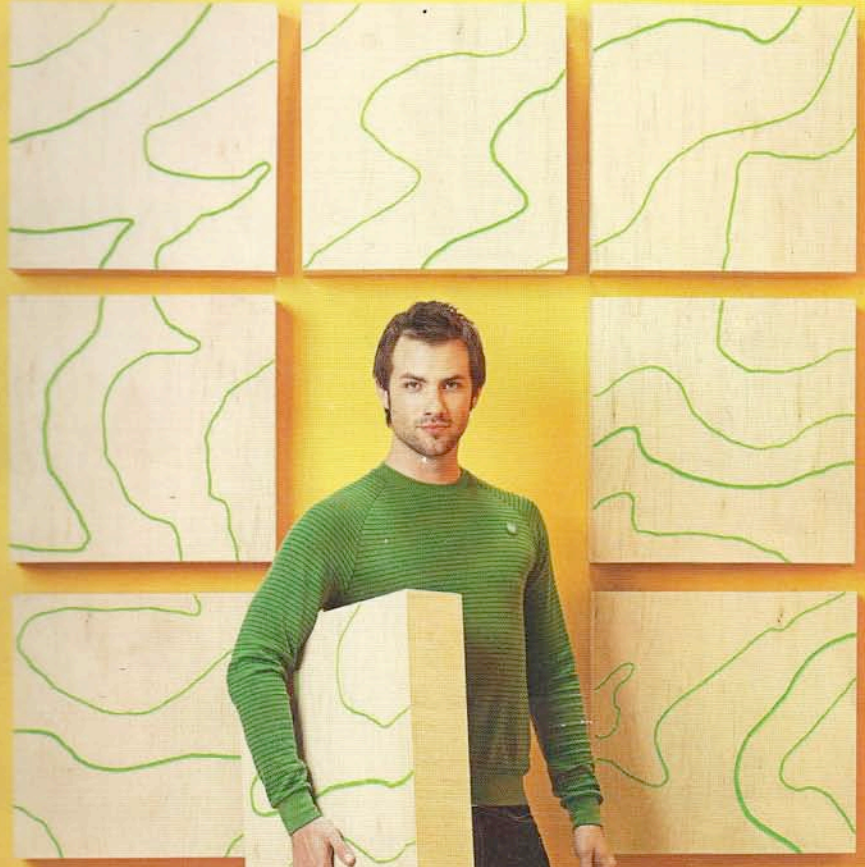
47

WAYS TO TRANSFORM YOUR CRAMPED CORNER INTO A ROOMY RETREAT

RECYCLE EVERYTHING!
PAGE 66

KILL KITCHEN CLUTTER!
PAGE 30

BUILD FLOATING SHELVES!
PAGE 42



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← PAGE 44



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STEP ONE

I, Scout:
Peter Bauer in
his natural element.

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Survival of the Grittiest

Portland's Urban Scout heads back to the land.

by Katherine Sharpe | Photo Melani Brown

Peter Bauer, alias Urban Scout, has been known to stalk the streets of Portland cloaked in nothing but a loincloth and a thin layer of mud. Bauer is a 25-year-old urban hunter-gatherer who describes his alter-ego as a "preemptive postapocalypticist" who "believes that civilization is about to collapse, so he lives as though it already has."

Bauer's doppelganger is a playful response to a real set of problems—from environmental degradation to postmodern anomie. At 17, Bauer dropped out of high school to learn wilderness survival. In 2002 he founded Mythmedia, a nonprofit organization that promotes "cultural and environmental change through the media arts."

The Urban Scout persona grew out of a 2004 film Bauer made with a friend. Origin-

nally a visual gag about a neo-caveman living in modern Portland, the Scout quickly took on a life of his own. Now he's an icon for Bauer's signature blend of survivalism and cheeky humor.

Bauer is masquerading as much as possible these days—not because he actually believes that the end is nigh, but because he thinks a primitive lifestyle may be the only antidote to civilization's excesses. "At some point, we'll crash and return to a simpler way of life," he says. "It's just a matter of time."

As Scout, Bauer sleeps in a teepee in a friend's backyard, forages for food, parties, blogs, and works on *rewild.info*, an online forum he started to pool knowledge about primitivism and survival. True, our antediluvian forebears may not have blogged or kept a six-pack of Pabst on hand, but in the face of peak oil, global warming, and overpopulation, Bauer says, lightheartedness is key. "Sometimes we get paralyzed and we can't do anything. That's why I have to make this fun." Follow Scout's brand of fun at www.urbanscout.org.