

The **500^s**

Sales

Profits

Assets

Market
Value

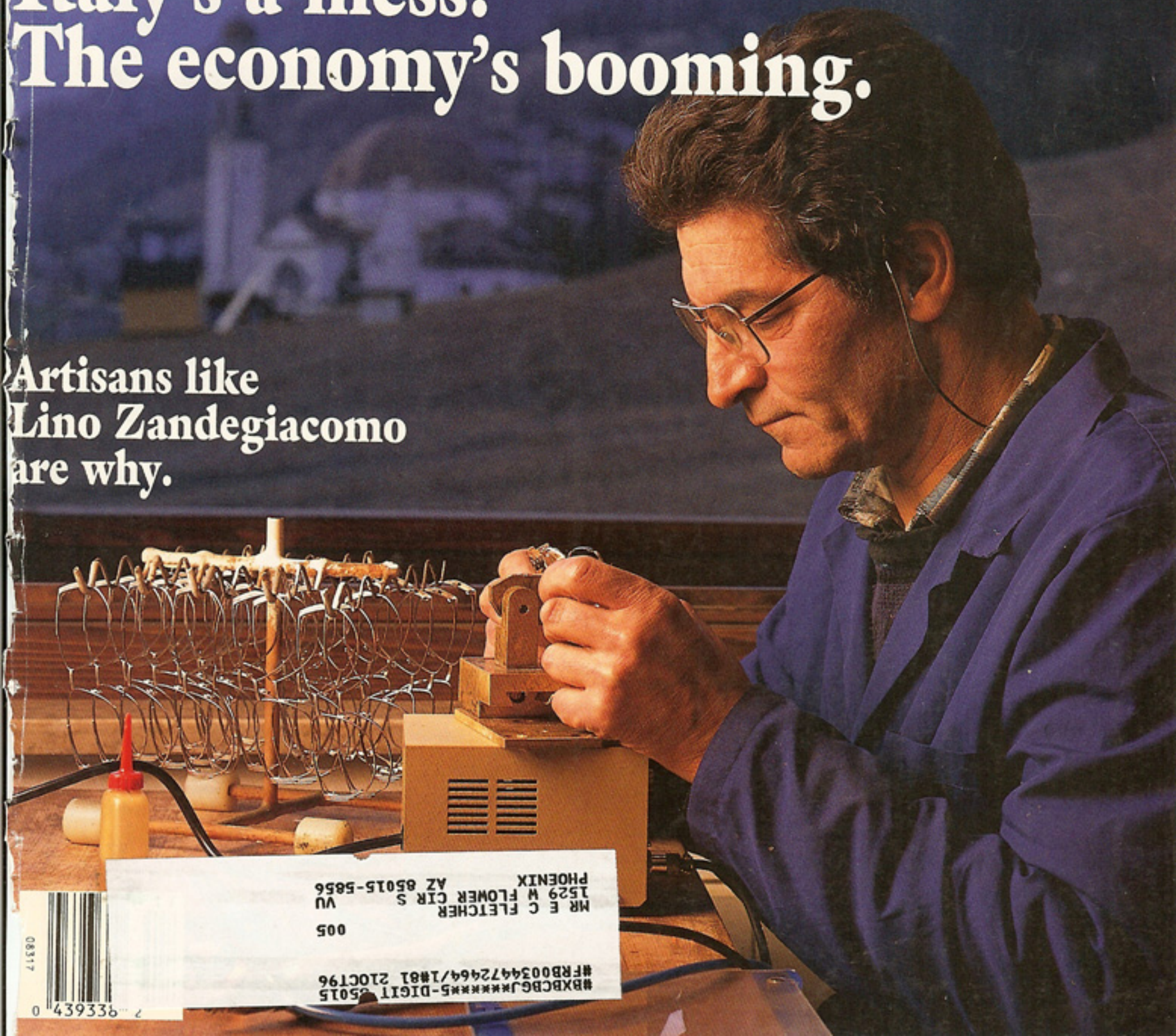
April 22, 1996

\$4.00 (Canada \$4.50)

Forbes

Italy's a mess.
The economy's booming.

Artisans like
Lino Zandegiacomo
are why.



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If you got it, flaunt it

THAT HOUSE in Gstaad with the Learjet perched on the private tarmac in the backyard is no longer the ultimate status symbol. Now it's: How many bodyguards do you have? Recently seen in Sun Valley's ultraswank BBC Cafe: Donald and Marla Trump with their lone bodyguard, watching Madonna march past flanked by two musclemen. But coffeehouse honors went to Ronald Perelman, who arrived with four. A rather important but bodyguard-deprived bank chairman was heard to say while observing the scene: "So this is the new way of saying, 'Hey, I'm important. Look at me.'"

In Rubin we trust



U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin
Pitching the new C-notes to Russia.

THE RUSSIANS have complete trust in the full faith and credit of the U.S. Treasury—at least in comparison with their own wallpaper. Thus a slew of \$100 bills circulate in Russia. This is good for the battered green-back, and is the equivalent for the U.S. government of borrowing money at 0%. But lately the Russian mafia has gotten very good at counter-

feiting C-notes, thus cutting into the Treasury's take and making Russians a bit less willing to give Uncle Sam those free loans. In response, the Treasury people have come up with new \$100 bills with script virtually impossible to counterfeit. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin is now pitching the new bills to Russians through a \$1 million TV campaign airing all over Russia. The exposure ought to come in handy if Rubin goes back to Wall Street and tries to peddle securities in Russia.

Poor Warren's almanac

CYNICAL WALL STREETERS know that companies are often put on the market or taken public when the owners know they have peaked. Warren Buffett puts a new twist on it in his annual report letter sent to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders last month. Buffett illustrates his point with an anecdote: A man says to a



ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURA CORNELL

Hey, man, where's my check?

THE 1960s "protest" movement sneered at corporate America and the establishment sneered back. But now, 30-some years on, the longhairs and the suits are embracing. Last month Nomura Securities' real estate division, headed by financial whiz kid Ethan Penner, invited 850 real estate power hitters to its annual industry gathering. Entertainment was supplied by oldtime rockers Bob Dylan, Crosby Stills Nash & Young and Rod Stewart. No mud-soaked Woodstock this time, but the posh Arizona Biltmore. Still, image is image. While Bob Dylan happily cashed his check, his flacks wouldn't even admit that he was there.

—ROBERT LA FRANCO

veterinarian, "Can you help me? Sometimes my horse walks just fine, and sometimes he limps." Replies the vet: "No problem. When he's walking fine, sell him."

Oops!

CHRYSLER's 64-year-old president, Bob Lutz, has always liked to live life in the fast lane. He owns 15 cars and trucks and 5 motorcycles, but the former Marine pilot's prize possession is a 600mph Czech-built Aero L-39 Albatros jet fighter, which he bought for \$200,000 about a year ago. Returning from a sortie last month, he suffered what he terms "cockpit distraction." He forgot to



Chrysler President
Bob Lutz

**Suffering
cockpit
distraction.**

lower his landing gear. He escaped unhurt, but the Albatros got banged up a bit. It was Lutz's second crash in five years.

Truth stranger than fiction?

LAWYER-turned-pop-scribe John Grisham (*The Firm*, *The Client*, *The Pelican Brief*) is suing the estate of his late agent, claiming that Jay Garon secretly scammed him for years. Court papers filed in Oxford, Miss. didn't say how much money was gleaned, but it could have been plenty: *FORBES* estimated that Grisham (ranked 34th on the top 40 entertainers list) raked in \$29 million in 1994-95. The writer accused Garon of funneling funds to a lawyer hired at Garon's suggestion. Garon, Grisham's only agent and his close confidant, died this past summer from a heart attack.



John Grisham, lawyer-turned-scribe
A taste of his own medicine.

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Great on the rocks.