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THE GREAT AMERICAN HOUSE

TRADITION FOR THE WAY WE LIVE NOW



“Gil is a trained classical architect but what sets him apart from others is his flair for design. His attention to detail is unsurpassed and especially creative.”

—*Bunny Williams*
from the foreword

Recently named by Architectural Digest as one of The New AD 100 and a winner of Veranda’s “Art of Design Award,” acclaimed architect Gil Schafer III fell in love with traditional architecture long before he considered a career in the field. The grandson and great, great grandson of architects, he grew up with a strong sense of how a well built, thoughtfully designed home can bring pleasure to daily life. It’s this desire, to make tradition livable, that permeates Schafer’s work and his new book, *THE GREAT AMERICAN HOUSE: Tradition for the Way We Live Now*.

THE GREAT AMERICAN HOUSE celebrates the best of American living for a new generation of homeowners who long for the sense of solidity and timelessness that comes from a home built to bridge the gap between past, present and future. Focusing on both new construction and historic home renovations, Schafer takes the best of traditional architecture—from the detailed craftsmanship to the elegant, balanced proportions—and translates it for the kind of connected, welcoming spaces that suit modern family life. Gorgeous, inspiring photos, alongside Schafer’s personable, informative text beautifully illustrate the entire process of restoring, renovating, and building classical homes.

In the book’s first section, Schafer explores the three essential elements that must come together in order for a great house to have real character: architecture, landscape, and decoration. Hundreds of full color photos—including interiors and design details, whole home portraits and landscapes—showcase each step of the design and building process. Schafer shares floor plans, walks through a project’s evolution and offers the history, problems, and solutions (continued)

BOOK SPECS

THE GREAT AMERICAN HOUSE
Tradition for the Way We Live Now
by Gil Schafer III
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CONTACT INFO

Sarah Burningham
Little Bird Publicity
917-546-6866
sarah@littlebirdpublicity.com



that influence each design decision. Passionate about the fundamental role that interior decoration plays in impacting and elevating the architecture of a house from the inside out, Schafer talks about layering furniture and fabrics, antiques and artworks, family photos, books, and all of the wonderful elements that create an indelible, highly personal sense of place. Schafer also believes that the landscape surrounding a house is often as important as the house itself. He writes about how to sustain a sense of discovery in the land, from building a sense of anticipation as you approach a home, to the role of the entry hall as a threshold to the more private realm of the garden. Readers will discover how the land can frame the architectural character of a house, bringing the home and the homeowners, closer to nature in subtle ways.

Schafer has a rare ability to understand the DNA of a house, and he stresses the importance in creating a narrative for a home, the property, and the people who live there. A mythology gives shape and direction to the architecture. In the book's second section, Schafer shares the stories behind four distinct homes—his own new “old” house in the Hudson Valley; the creation of a new farming estate for a young family; the renovation of a historic home in Nashville designed by Charles Platt in 1915; and the restoration of a magnificent 1843 Greek Revival mansion in Charleston—walking readers through each project from start to finish.

Ultimately, *THE GREAT AMERICAN HOUSE* is about more than the evolution and rebirth of traditional residential architecture for a new generation. Schafer’s goal is to create places that enhance the enjoyment of life. After all, as he says in the book, “If a house is going to feel like a home, it has to create opportunities for memories, even in the smallest moments of life.”



MEET THE AUTHOR

Award-winning architect and AD 100 member Gil Schafer is consistently recognized as one of the leading practitioners of contemporary classical architecture. Descended from a family of architects, Gil “designs the sort of houses that appear to have been handed down for generations, though they are often new and adapted to modern life.”* Gil’s work has been featured in many publications on both sides of the Atlantic, including *Architectural Digest*, *Elle Décor*, the *New York Times*, and *Country Life*. From 1999 to 2006, Gil served as president and then chairman of The Institute of Classical Architecture & Art. He divides his time between New York City and a country house in upstate New York. **Veranda*