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The Moe Dorns

Local architects formed The Moe Dorns and performed at the Modern Show. Pictured left to right: Dean Brenneman, David Lowe, David Haase, Jerry Sparkman, Martin Gold, Dan Hinkle and Jim Grove.



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SHOWN ABOVE FIRM // Seagull Home by Murray Homes, photo by Ryan Gamma Photography.



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MANNY DIAZ

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Manny Diaz, the mayor of Miami from 2001 through 2009, led the city through exciting changes, including turning aging parks into public treasures. He came to town this spring to speak at events organized by the Center for Architecture Sarasota, and he sat down exclusively with *SRQ* to share how Miami's experiences could guide this community forward.

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MODERN HOME

2017 ANNUAL EDITION

20TH CENTURY INNOVATIONS in materials and technology have allowed us to turn what were previously considered to be "necessities" into art forms. Food and clothing, transport and housing, the comparative comforts afforded to modern society have let mankind end the inhibiting requirements of daily survival and express our innate creativity in ways that would have been unimaginable just a century ago. Architecture during this period has fought against the limitations of gravity, and the idea that the structure itself either is or carries the artistic creativity in its form. The typically simpler lines and ornamentation-free materials that we associate with modern architecture allow us to celebrate the spaces revealed. The Gulf Coast has a significant history of being at the forefront of this innovation. The Sarasota School of Architecture helped put our region on the map at a time when people didn't even know what to call this burgeoning style. Each year, *Modern Home* magazine celebrates the newest and most spectacular applications of modern architectural style in our region. Each annual edition becomes part of the historical record, and the architects profiled redefine how space can be used and celebrated. Join us and join our amazing local architects, as they break free of gravity and exalt in the expression of space as a human art.



Wes Roberts

WES ROBERTS
Executive Publisher

2017

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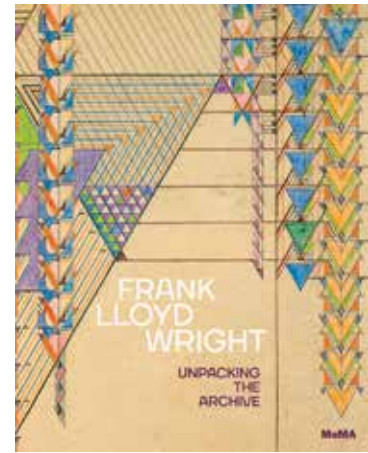
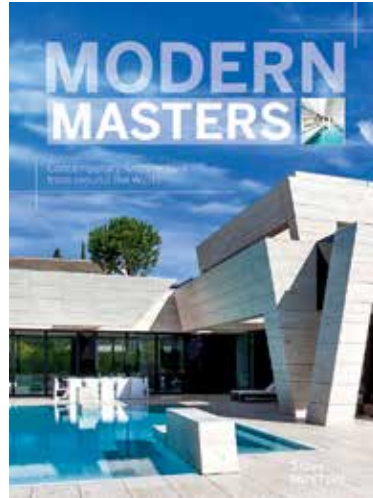
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DURASUPREME

LIVING PAGES

Compiled by Shelby Schwartz



Authors explore the history and impact of modern architecture around the world and in Florida.

River and Road: Fort Myers Architecture from Craftsman to Modern- Jared Beck, Pamela Miner (University Press of Florida, \$35.32, available this September 12) Authors Beck and Miner delve into the architectural history of Fort Myers, FL, from the winter estates of industrial giants such as Thomas Edison and Henry Ford to the vibrant neighborhoods surrounding and filled with examples of every major movement from Spanish to Mediterranean to Italian Renaissance and Colonial Revival. With stories from residents and owners, hear the history of Fort Myers' architectural expansion from the dawn of the 20th century to today.

Landscapes of Modern Architecture: Wright, Mies, Neutra, Aalto, Barragán- Marc Treib (Yale University Press, \$50.64) Pushing back against the accusation that modern architects show little concern for climate, topography and vegetation, Treib compiles an authoritative survey of 20th century architecture and the surrounding landscapes to show how site consideration remained a guiding principle. Centered on the works of five notable architects—Wright, van der Rohe, Neutra, Aalto and Barragán—rarely published archival drawings and plans accompany the author's original photography.

Designing Detroit: Wirt Rowland and the Rise of Modern American Architecture- Michael G. Smith (Wayne State University Press, \$39.40) An ode to the unsung hero of Detroit architecture, Wirt Rowland served as chief designer under the famed architect Albert Kahn and designed many of the city's hallmark structures, such as the General Motors and First National Bank buildings. As modernism began to take shape, Smith argues it was Rowland who devised a wholly new design philosophy that eschewed elements from the past and focused on the project's intended use.

Modern Masters: Contemporary Architecture from Around the World- Steve Huyton (Schiffer Publishing, \$50, available this September 28) Huyton revels in the architect's engineering savvy in this showcase of more than 70 properties from some of the field's most celebrated practitioners. A globe-trotting read, explore luxury properties around the world and see how challenging sites bring innovative solutions and the opportunity to experiment in space, volume and material.

Frank Lloyd Wright: Unpacking the Archive- Frank Lloyd Wright (Artist) (The Museum of Modern Art, \$46.37) Created in conjunction with a major exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, this visual catalog celebrates the work of one of Modernism's most prolific and renowned architects through a series of scholarly examinations by guest authors. With each chapter focusing on a single object from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, highlights range from Wright's most attention-grabbing attempts (a mile-high skyscraper) to lesser-known projects such as the Rosenwald School.

The Last House: A Love Story About Architecture and Place- Ron Haase (BookBaby, \$19.95) Architect and author Ron Haase celebrates the singular nature of Florida architecture through this narrative about a husband and wife constructing four houses throughout their life together. With each house representing a particular style, Haase revels in how the distinct surroundings of the Florida landscape impact broader architectural movements, complete with architectural designs and pen-and-ink drawings from the author.

Classic Cracker: Florida's Wood-Frame Architecture- Ronald W. Haase (Pineapple Press, \$22.57) Winner of the 1993 LoPresti Award for excellence in art publishing, Haase focuses in on an architectural style inescapably tied to the Florida landscape and culture. Tracking the evolution of Florida Cracker architecture from the early homesteads and dogtrotts to the four-square Georgians and townhouses, the author includes numerous floor plans to show the evolution of the style.

RE-USA: 20 American Stories of Adaptive Reuse: A Toolkit for Post-Industrial Cities- Matteo Robiglio (JOVIS, \$39.95, available this October 24) As the industrial boom of the 20th century wanes, an architectural legacy of abandoned factories, warehouses and docks looms in its wake. But while the original intention may be gone, many sit ripe for reuse and reclamation for any number of applications from research and education to sports and leisure. As major cities across the country embrace adaptive reuse with grassroots campaigns and municipal initiatives, Robiglio provides a handbook for future reclamation by studying practical examples already showing success.

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All About the Angles

A singular look from award-winning designer Giulio Lazotti, the Ogetti cocktail table is constructed from three large pieces of Uliano Marble gathered from centuries-old quarries in Carrara, Italy. The Sarasota Collection Home Store, 622 Central Ave., Sarasota, 941-955-8313, \$2,997.



Unconventional By Design

By Luis Alejandro Blasini for Kanna, the Nest Chair is perfect for garden or poolside soirees, constructed by all-weather wicker wrapped in an aluminum frame for a fun, active setting. The Sarasota Collection Home Store, 622 Central Ave., Sarasota, 941-955-8313, \$1,525.

Open Hearts

The Vitra Heart Cone Chair, designed by Verner Panton in 1959 for a furniture series based on simple geometric shapes, incorporates elements of Pop Art into a timeless piece. The Vitra chair remains the most famous design from the series. Soft Square, softsquare.com, 941-554-4068, \$4,375.



Dripping in Gold

Copper and rose gold have dominated fashion and are now being incorporated in interior design with this festive Jensen Pendant Chandelier. Height-adjustable with cascading copper pendants, this seven-piece chandelier suspended with copper wire is sure to command attention. Copenhagen Imports, 7211 South Tamiami Trl., Sarasota, 941-923-2569, \$895.

A Midsummer Night's Lighting

Made by Hubbardton Forge, the Brindille Lamp melds modern and natural elements to light up conversation and the room. The base, handcrafted with burnished steel, exudes a whimsical touch sure to soften any environment, from the living room to the home office. Pecky Interiors, 100 Central Ave. #1026, Sarasota, \$945.



Playful Textures

The Linear Bar Stool, with its aesthetically pleasing texture, adds a luxurious and playful twist to any room. From Worlds Away, this piece features a hide and Mongolian fur cushion wrapped in a brass frame, giving a living space depth and character. Black Bird Lifestyle, 1540 Main St., Sarasota, 941-366-0941, \$1,475.

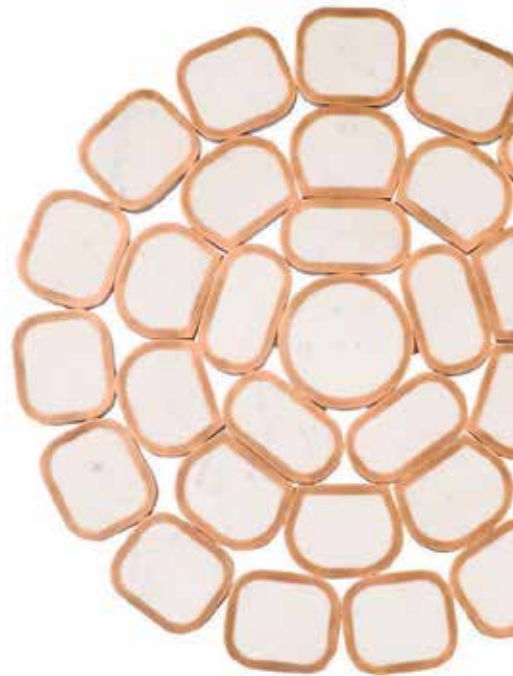


Table for One

Designed by Jay Jeffers for Arteriors, this collection focuses on small tables that can hold one drink and be moved around easily, but still can hold its own next to larger furnishings. The Octavia Accent Table is cast with a matte brass crown shape surrounding a black marble top. Black Bird Lifestyle, 1540 Main St., Sarasota, 941-366-0941, \$2,464.

Concentric Geometry

Designed by Barry Golralnick, the Norma Cocktail Table with its French Brass base and an enchanting geometric Agaria Marble top can stand alone as a work of art or be dressed up with a colorful lamp to complement most decors. Robb & Stucky, 7557 South Tamiami Trl., Sarasota, 941-702-8400, \$1,899.



Plush and Polished

The Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Dumont Sofa has a welcoming curve that encourages guests to turn toward each other. With an intimate shape perfect for entertaining, a single row of buttons dresses up the soft velvet texture, radiating a clean, modern look. Robb & Stucky, 7557 South Tamiami Trl., Sarasota, 941-702-8400, \$3,400.



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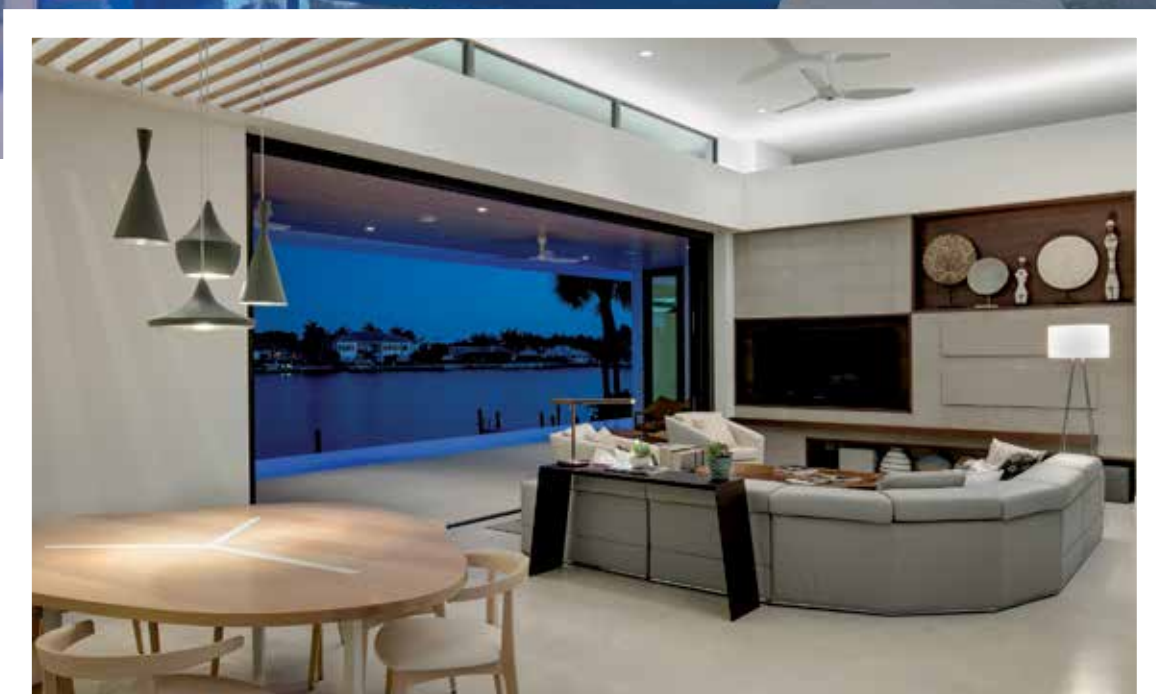


ONE-STOP MODERN

Murray Homes is a holistic resource for everything from realty to design to building, with modern as its most in-demand style.

As the local marketplace shifts toward a more European-minded, modern sensibility, the award-winning Murray Homes is both wholly prepared and excitedly ready. Clients that desire high-end, custom waterfront residences enlist the firm, which includes British father-son team John and Steve Murray, as well as a staff of experts. The Murrays have more than four decades of combined homebuilding experience in the United Kingdom and Florida, and their globally-minded outlook helps them stay ahead of design trends.

FIRM // Murray Homes **CONTENT WRITER** // Abby Weingarten // **PHOTOGRAPHERS** // Ryan Gamma Photography and Mark Borosch





Murray Homes
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"We work with a multitude of architects to produce different styles and plans, and we have noticed that there has been a definite move toward a more contemporary, transitional style of house," Steve Murray says. "It may be because people were so fed up with the Spanish Med style that they reacted in a very strong way to push it to a new style. More than that, I think what we're seeing is a movement away from builders building spec houses determining what architecture should be. We're moving toward custom clients saying, 'This is my lot. This is what I want. And I'm going to find the best architects and builders to make it happen.'"

Those clients who want the best look to Murray Homes. The family-run firm (which has its own in-house realty department) uses the most cutting-edge, efficient technologies and building materials for renovations, investment properties and seaside homes. As a full-service resource, the firm identifies vacant land, negotiates lender financing, manages budgets, conducts feasibility studies, assists in design and construction, and even markets and sells properties.

"We're currently building a Guy Peterson design west of the Trail and there has been a lot of interaction with Guy and Damien to define exactly how the house should be built. The owner is an architect himself, so there is a lot of very high-quality discussion that goes into the minor, as well as the major, details," Steve Murray says. "We also have a 10,500-square-foot modern home we're doing on Bird Key with CMSA, set to be finished in 2018. It's the biggest house on Bird Key (very modern in nature) and the architecture extends from the main structure to the hardscape, pool-scape, landscape, fountains and ponds. It's a very integrated design."

Murray Homes is known for this type of integrated design, and perfecting the process has been years in the making. Steve Murray operated a construction company in London, England, in the 1990s before moving to Sarasota and launching Murray Homes. He then teamed up with his broker wife, Bev, and brought Murray Realty into the company. Steve Murray has since coordinated the bidding, billing and subcontracting for numerous new and remodeled homes.

"We stay within the Sarasota-Manatee area and have an operation in Lakewood Ranch, but the majority of our work is waterfront-based and around downtown Sarasota, Longboat Key, Lido Key and Bird Key," Steve Murray says. "A big part of our business is also the renovation of penthouses (from kitchen and bathroom remodels to the complete gutting and reworking of 5,000-square-foot condos)." Whether the job is a redo or something brand new, Murray Homes is well-versed in how to proceed. They are currently working with Chris Leader on an ultra contemporary design in Long Boat Key and have just completed a beautiful Michael Bade modern home working with Punit Patel of Sawa for interior design.

"Having a realty company in-house is a fantastic opportunity for us to understand the marketplace, be available for clients to find land, and recommend the best places to buy and tear down," Steve Murray says. "Really, what we have is the ability to find where clients want to build, help them design it and then build it. We cover all aspects." To stay timeless, Murray Homes is always evolving and building structures with longevity in mind. In less than a decade, Steve Murray has watched

the local marketplace develop a desire for the more modern look, which he has been happy to accommodate via angular, geometric designs. "There is a lot more awareness of European styles now—from appliances to tile to cabinetry to plumbing fixtures. Europe is a leader in most of those things and we're seeing a lot more of that now accepted in the designs and finishes of houses. Coming from England, it's nice to see that. I think it's a cycle," Steve Murray says. "I think there's a national cycle where modern is becoming more popular, but more so in Sarasota because of the history with the Sarasota School of Architecture. When people see modern, they like it and they want it."

And they want the leaders in the industry to build it. "I think experience goes a long way. Working with the best professionals that produce the best-quality designs and architecture is important. Employing the best people to make those houses come together in the best way is important," Steve Murray says. "There is a sense within our company of who we are and we take a lot of pride in what we do." MH

Boutique Chic

Nathan Cross of NWC Construction, Inc. creates two ambitious modern homes (a West Indies-style structure and a Sarasota Bay spec project) and takes a boutique approach to both.



“Boutique” is a prime adjective to describe the approach behind NWC Construction, Inc.—a state-certified general contractor with two decades of building and remodeling experience. The man behind the coveted brand is Nathan Cross—the company’s owner and president, who is a second-generation builder, a certified local, state and national award winner for custom building, green building and remodeling.

Cross believes in high-caliber construction that does not fit the cookie-cutter mold. He is committed to staying ahead of the building curve, project by delicately-designed project. Two of Cross’ latest custom residences exemplify his quality-over-quantity philosophy: a West Indies-style structure and a project on Sarasota Bay. Both are ultra-modern. Both are intended to garner attention from passers-by and generate buzz.

In July 2016, Cross began building his modern home on Sarasota Bay, and it will be completed by the end of this summer. Architect Johnathan Parks, of Sarasota’s Solstice Planning and Architecture, first introduced Cross to the project.

“The structure is really unique. It pushes the envelope of structural design,” Cross says. “We also enjoyed the owners of the home when we were introduced to them.” The 4,735-square-foot residence has three stories; a three-car garage; and an additional 3,164 square feet of outdoor area. The third-story loft features a balcony with a stellar view of New Pass and downtown Sarasota.

“There are so many unique features. The home has a really great, modern design and has several cantilevers, a suspended staircase, an infinity edge pool, and many other areas that make it unique and one-of-a-kind,” Cross says. “There is a cantilevered beam on the third level that the roof trusses connect to. The master bathroom also hangs out into space with no support underneath.



"... We build the luxury custom home that is tailored to our client's needs and wants."



The staircase hangs from the ceiling and is metal that will be finished with wood treads and a glass railing."

Cross' modern West Indies-style home—a 4207-square foot structure—is one of his fully-completed stunners. It includes a split plan, multiple suites, a flex space, a gym, a four-car garage and a private courtyard. The project took a full year and was finished in November 2016.

"For this home, these clients came to us with a design-build project. They needed to stay within their budget, so it was important for them to have a design driven by not only their style but also by their budget," Cross says. "This home has a great outdoor feeling to it. The courtyard is private, with hardscaping and artificial turf for low maintenance. The back porch is positioned so that the whole rear of the home opens up to it."

These two projects are equally representative of Cross' style and method as a builder/remodeler. They embody his vision, his calculated attention to detail and his forward-thinking philosophy.

"Both of these projects showcase our commitment to being the best contractors we can be and working with

the clients to give them what they want," Cross says. "Listening is an important part of what we do, and also knowing the mechanics of building so that we can turn that listening into reality for our clients. When a client needs something, they call me. They don't start from the bottom up. They call the guy who has the license, who signs the contracts and checks. We are strictly client-based and staying the size we are allows us to do that."

Cross stays closely connected to his longtime clients and they trust his individualized method. He has been a builder for 19 years and depends on referrals for his success, he says. NWC Construction specializes in custom home building, on-the-lot construction, home additions, and full or partial home remodeling services throughout Southwest Florida areas.

"Because we are not developers of subdivisions or communities, we are free of buildout commitments and other timeframe constraints that can compromise a project," Cross says. "You will never see us in a subdivision, building spec homes. We are what is becoming a lost art in construction. We build the luxury custom home that is

tailored to our client's needs and wants." The industry has certainly taken notice. Cross is the recipient of the 2011 Florida Home Builders Association "Remodeler of the Year" Award and the 2009 Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando "Builder of the Year" Award.

"If it is dream-able, we can build it. We tell our clients that we do not just want them to love us for a day or until we get the next draw; we need them to love us forever," Cross says. "The main thing that sets us apart from 95 percent of builders in the area is that we are for quality, not quantity. We do not want to get bigger in the numbers of projects we do each year. We do hope that the projects get bigger and more challenging. We want to work on projects that people drive by and say, 'Wow, that is a great home.'" MH

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MODERN MENAGERIE

From the homes of Bird Key to the streets of Downtown Sarasota, the 2017 Modern Show celebrates the art and architecture of the Suncoast. **Written by** PHIL LEDERER | **Photography by** WYATT KOSTYGAN



IT'S A WARM AND SUNNY FRIDAY MORNING IN SARASOTA and the usually sleepy street on Bird Key bustles with activity, parked cars lining the road as men and women from across the region descend upon one house in particular—a newly remodeled home designed by architect Guy Peterson and built by Sarasota contractor Michael K. Walker. Marching up the driveway—its paved blocks poured in alternating stripes with encroaching green spaces—chatter subsides as they approach the entrance, slits in the concrete walls giving only a partial view of the home hidden behind, and through a winding outdoor passage lined with lush greenery, runnels of smooth grey stones and a living wall installation of arranged tillandsia air plants, courtesy of landscape architect David Young. At the shaded door, a secret sculpture nook hints at more inside—a substantial collection of modern art rivaled only by the artistry of Peterson and Young's design. "We don't like to give everything away right away," says Peterson with a smile. "The progression as you enter is part of the experience." And when the door opens, the show begins. The opening salvo of the Center for Architecture Sarasota's (CFAS) 2017 Modern Show celebrating art in architecture, the featured home tour on Bird Key represents only the first stop on a two-day excursion into the world of modern architecture that saw everything from guest lecturers and interactive opportunities to a bona fide rock show/gallery presentation in CFAS headquarters. "The relationship of art and architecture is an important and symbiotic one," says CFAS Founder Cynthia Peterson. "They complement and influence each other very strongly especially in the context of modern design. CFAS wanted to highlight that relationship and importance."

Spread and right: 2017 Modern Show attendees navigate an elaborate entrance for the home tour on Bird Key. Inside, visitors explore the great room and kitchen designed by Guy Peterson Office For Architecture, some peering out the windows at the water garden and pool from DWY Landscape Architects.



Bird Key Architecture Tour

INSIDE, PETERSON'S DESIGN IS QUINTESSENTIAL MODERN—SLEEK AND GLEAMING with precise angling, clean white walls and the great room dominated by a wall of broad glass windows overlooking water views of the bay and an outdoor pool and water garden designed by Young—and, standing in the open kitchen, the man himself leads the gathered crowd through the life of the project that took years to complete. Housing a modern art collection of painting and sculpture showcasing everything from Robert Rauschenberg to Syd Solomon, the art and architecture arrive in tandem for a home that feels neither stuffy nor intimidating, but somehow carving out a warm cozy center among the sharp lines. Behind the house, a watery sanctuary built by Young over the course of eight years awaits in the form of a long rectangular lap pool lined by palms and a secluded and shaded water garden floored with stone slabs that seemingly float like great tectonic plates over canals of running water. In the garden and under the shade of a slatted pergola, the owners find their place of Zen morning or night, basking in the Florida warmth after a lifetime living in Minnesota. “Everything was built for their lifestyles,” says Young, who, though first on the scene by about five years, also adapted his plans as he saw Peterson’s design grow around him, bringing the two in accord. “It inspired us and makes our work look that much better.”

Gallery Creations

INSIDE THE CENTER FOR ARCHITECTURE ITSELF, the festivities continue. Modern art lines the walls and modern furniture populates the gallery as a special exhibition for the event makes its debut—a collection of hard hats designed and decorated by local artists and architects, including members of CityLab Sarasota, a master of architecture program created in partnership with the University of Florida.



This page: The Hard Hat Project brought architects, artists, students and professors together to put their own stylistic spin on the ubiquitous construction accessory for a special 2017 Modern Show exhibition at CFAS headquarters. **Top row, left to right:** *The Wise Architect* by Karl Bernhard, AIA; Sweet Sparkman Architects. **Second row:** *Colors of the Gulf* by Steffani Drass, Leader Design Studio; *Dictator* by Jim Keaton; *Clifford Parallel* by Andrew Etter, Echt-Architects; *We Are the Future* by Nora Kuhn. **Third row:** *All Roads* by Kortnee Gonzales, Echt-Architects; *Orange Crush* by Martin Gold, AIA; *Under Construction* by Javi Suarez, AIA, Apex-Studio. **Fourth row:** *Shark* by Wilfred Laurence; *The Florida Landscape* by Olivia Craig; *Modern Tribal* by Grace Howl; *Untitled* by Beth Blanda. **Fifth row:** *Green Mountainside* by Martha Laurence; *Egret* by Henry Laurence; *Brain Activity* by Damien Blumetti, Elena Nonino, Olivia Craig, Doug Kresge, Guy Peterson, FAIA. **Bottom row:** *Roses* by Danielle Peterson.



This page, front to back: Dean Brenneman, David Lowe, David Haase, Jerry Sparkman, Martin Gold, Dan Hinkle and Jim Grove of The Moe Derna.

The Moe Derna

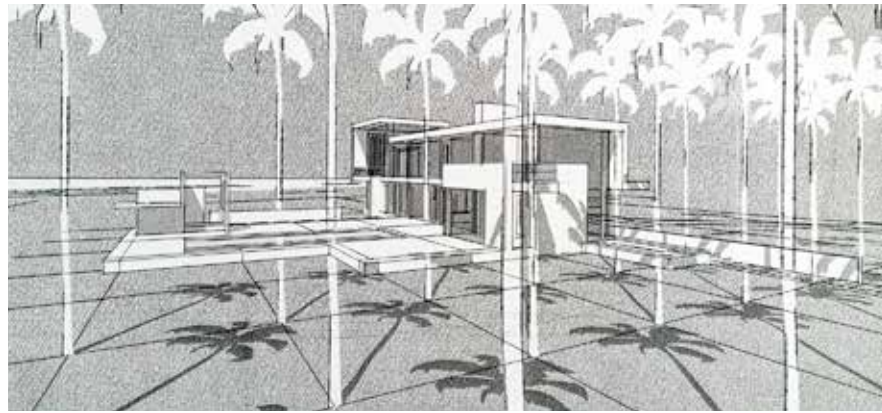
ASSEMBLED FROM LOCAL ARCHITECTS, designers and real estate professionals and for one-night only, The Moe Derna rocked the Friday night Modern Show party with an outside concert sporting classic rock favorites and a particularly in-your-face rendition of the Reverend Al Green's *Take Me To The River*.



The Sculpture Walking Tour

NOT CONTENT TO STAY INDOORS TO APPRECIATE ARCHITECTURE, local troubadour and amateur Sarasota historian (but full-time appreciator) John McCarthy leads a troop of near 30 curious onlookers through a tour of Sarasota's varied, and sometimes hidden, wealth of public art. Starting at CFAS headquarters on Orange Avenue, McCarthy and his trailing company wend their way a bit up Ringling Avenue before looping back to City Hall at the corner of First Street and traipsing down Main, through Five Points Park and back through Burns Court. From the Tube Dudes dotting the landscape to the white marble of the Smoking Joe's façade, McCarthy lays bear the artistic beauty enhancing, even if unappreciated, Sarasota's visual landscape. "We drive by this everyday," says McCarthy, encouraging his charges to be "bird watchers," and call out unnoticed bits of public art as they pass. The work of sculptor Jack Cartlidge dominates the scene, his great cast-copper constructions to be found all over the grounds of City Hall, from the satirical *Nobody's Listening* to the peaceful repose of *Mother Earth* and the overtly humorous *Pioneer Family Hears A Sound. Is it a Bear or Billy Bowlegs?* On Main Street, McCarthy makes careful notice of the Kress building, constructed in the 1930s with gold leaf adornment and inspired by the newly discovered tomb of King Tutankhamen. "This is Sarasota's best example of art deco," says McCarthy. "As long as a high rise doesn't go in its place."

This page, top to bottom: Outside Five Points Park, John McCarthy regales the tour with stories of Sarasota's public art heyday, as he and attendees speculate on the symbolism of this early piece of Sarasota public art.



This page, top to bottom: Architectural sketching from Ron Haase. Haase initiates a “throw down” with his class, inviting students to stand in a circle and cast their work to the ground to be evaluated in the round by the group. **Next page:** A pair of Modern Show 2017’s youngest attendees build with LEGOs in CFAS headquarters.

The Sketch Class

In the room next to the hard hat exhibit, a small group of students and interested artists take a sketch class from author, architect and 2017 Modern Show guest Ron Haase. *SRQ* sat with Haase to discuss Florida architecture, his latest book on Florida Cracker architecture and what he can and can’t teach.

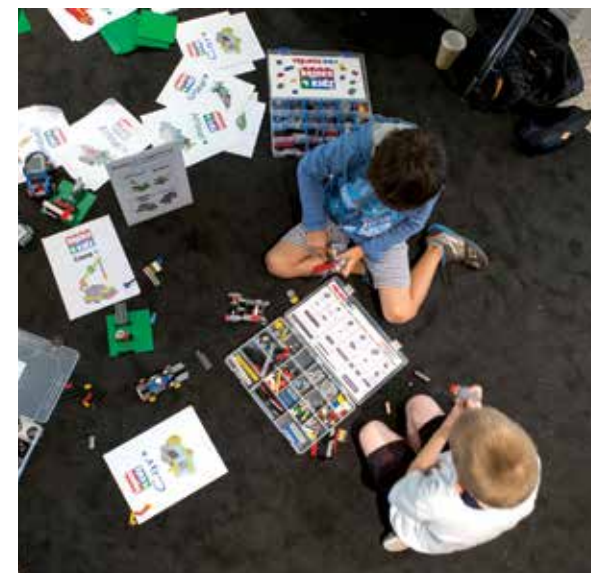
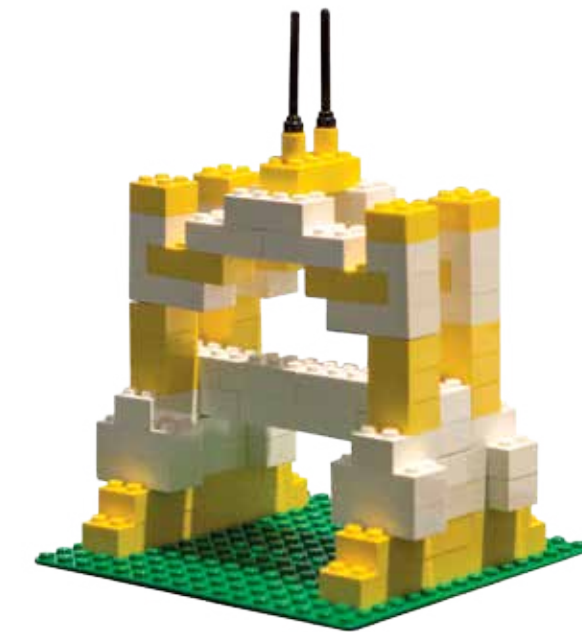
SRQ: What is Florida Cracker Architecture? Ron Haase I came to the University of Florida to teach architecture and began to, on weekends, go out and explore the old Cracker houses that are out there in the woods up near Gainesville and McIntosh and Micanopy. I started to realize there was an energy efficiency quality here. The people mitigated against the Florida heat by designing Cracker homes. The design of the structures was good protection from the solar heat, with good shading and good air movement. With those two things, shade and air movement, you could be pretty darn comfortable without the benefits of air conditioning. It was an education to find out there was a real intent to mitigate against the Florida climate in the way the old crackers built their houses.

Is that what your latest book is about? *The Last House* is not only about the old cracker architecture of North Florida, but all of Florida. The architecture of Florida has four significant faces to it—four vernacular styles. The old

wood-frame cracker style of the north, then the Sarasota School of Architecture, which is phenomenal and based mostly in the mid-century era with Paul Rudolph and Ralph Twitchell. The third is the art deco of the Miami area and the fourth is the Spanish Colonial architecture that came from the first settlements in St. Augustine. The book is a fictional piece about two married people who over the course of their lives together build four buildings in those four places—the first simple house on Cross Creek on a river, the second one on a beach in Siesta Key, the third on Biscayne Bay, a magnificent house, and then the fourth house, where they retired to, on St. Augustine on the beach. In order to tell that fictional story, I wanted to augment it with a lot of sketches.

What is the role of the sketch? Is that where everything begins? You got it right there. That is where everything begins. Your mind is going and you probably don’t put anything down on paper for a while. You kind of just let it congregate. For me, those images would begin with what is there now, with a context of what architecture exists, the vernacular issues and the cultural issues. All of these things are in my head as I sit down and sketch. It is a blessing for those of us who are in the design field that we can visualize this stuff and then put it down on paper. It is something I do not think you can teach. It is something that you are lucky enough to have the gift for.

What do you wish to impart to the students? Confidence. Confidence in oneself comes through repetition and getting out there and doing it. Learning by doing is the only way these people who are here at the workshop will really get good at it. I am not going to teach them how to do it today. I am going to expose them to exercises that will help them, stimulate them, get them out and then they are going to teach themselves.



Bricks4Kidz

CLOSING OUT THE WEEKEND, CFAS OPENS ITS DOORS TO ALL AGES for a day of guest lectures for the adults and creative exploration for the children. Guy Peterson returns to the stage for a talk on the importance of sketching in understanding architecture, followed by interior design maven Wilson Stiles bringing an international flair with an examination of the *Maison de Verre*, designed by Pierre Charreau in Paris, France, and local artist Kate Hendrickson leading a discussion on the seminal arts publication, *XXe Siecle*. Haase closes the night with a book signing and discussion of Florida’s vernacular architecture. For the kids, the CFAS lecture hall is transformed into a LEGO playland, with stations set up for kids of varying ages to try their own hand at creation and fashion themselves as amateur architects. Picking up an oversized scroll of paper on the way out, it unrolls into a black-and-white dioramic presentation of Sarasota’s architectural landmarks, with the names of their great creators like Paul Rudolph and Victor Lundy in big bubble letters nearby. With it, kids can bring their own artistic sensibilities to bear with colored pencils or crayons while learning about the history of their hometown’s visual landscape. Like the lectures, the tours and the parties and rock bands, it’s all designed to make architecture accessible despite its staid nature and intimidating size—and that’s what CFAS and the Modern Show are all about and what they hope to do for years to come. “The Modern Show is only in its second year but has already become a major fundraiser for CFAS that supports all of our wonderful programs for the year,” says Cynthia Peterson. “Hosting over 100 programs with over 4,000 attendees and with an even more ambitious schedule of events for next year, programming funding is crucial to bringing these programs to our community. We are so thankful the community has supported us so strongly in our efforts.” **MH**



BRAND NEW BAY

Former Miami Mayor Manny Diaz says Sarasota deserves a better Bayfront. **WRITERS** // Aviel Kanter and Jacob Ogles



Evolving a downtown waterfront into a cultural asset brings a daunting task. As Sarasota leaders look toward the future of the Bayfront, they can see the work of other communities who have tackled such tasks before. Manny Diaz, the mayor of Miami from 2001 through 2009, led the city through exciting changes, including turning aging parks into public treasures. He came to town this spring to speak at events organized by the Center for Architecture Sarasota, and he sat down exclusively with *SRQ* to share how Miami's experiences could guide this community forward.

As this community develops and executes a new vision for the Bayfront, how should leaders balance the competing desires for public park space versus the development of cultural resources?

You can do both. A lot of the great cultural institutions like museums are located in public space, with green space, in parks around the world. We did that ourselves; we put our museum of art [Perez Art Museum Miami] and our museum of science [Frost Science Museum] on the waterfront. But first and foremost, the guiding principal has to be that there is public use. The public owns the Bay and should be entitled to enjoy it. Nature is one of those things we can enjoy for free, so it's a great equalizer. It's a very important process for the City of Sarasota. I almost fell out of the car yesterday when we drove up and saw a sea of surface parking on your waterfront. Seriously? That's not where it belongs. You can activate that area or choose not to activate it, but clearly it should be green space. You want to be able to see a show and walk around, and take your family or significant other, presumably in that green area, but also on what should be a Baywalk that connects the entire Bay. There is some portion of that there now. You want to just enjoy it with your family, maybe have people selling ice cream. The condition you have now is, you drive in, you go see your show and you get back in your car and go wherever in suburbia or to Siesta Key. It should be more than that.

Like Miami, Sarasota faces the threat of sea level rise on its waterfront. How does a city need to accommodate for that in its urban planning?

Reduce your carbon footprint. All of us collectively can help at least slow down

the process if we do a better job getting cars off the road and having green, energy-efficient buildings. I'm not sure if you are required to have those here. We are [in Miami]. On the other side of the equation, start developing a different framework of dealing with the traditional gray infrastructure, like pipes. Every infrastructure project should have, as a check-the-box thing, to address sea level rise.

There's been a push-and-pull in Sarasota between business leaders who want a conference center on the Bayfront and neighborhoods that don't want vertical construction. How do you bring these parties together?

I'm not a fan of doing a convention center on the Bay. It might be good for convention-goers but not the people who live here. When I'm in Sarasota for a convention, I'm here for the weekend and then leave. You live here 365 days a year. You should have much higher weight in what happens on the waterfront than me. I would caution those in the business community to do a lot of research on convention centers. We went through the same back-and-forth when we had an old convention center on our waterfront. We talked about retrofitting it and opted not to. It did not make any business sense. The convention world has gotten highly competitive. There are some threshold numbers in terms of square footage and amenities to attract the conventions you want. I'm not talking about garage sale kind of things—that's not going to be profitable. You want the American Institute of Architects. You want the American Medical Association. The big guns. In order to do that, if you are not above 700,000 or 1 million square feet, with a convention center hotel connected to the center, you are not able to compete.

ABOUT MANNY DIAZ

Manny Diaz, a native of Cuba, came to the United States as a child in 1961 before studying law at the University of Miami. He gained national prominence representing the Miami relatives of Elian Gonzalez in a high-profile immigration and custody case in 2000. He would be elected mayor in 2001 and until 2009, when term limits prohibited him from seeking a third term. During his time in office, Diaz earned the Urban Innovator of the Year award from the Manhattan Institute and served as president of the US Conference of Mayors. He oversaw a revitalization of the city, which previous to his time in office developed a reputation for crime and corruption. A waterfront cultural district and downtown revitalization remain major achievements of his time in office.

Photo of Manny Diaz by Wyatt Kostygan, opposite page.

So would Sarasota be better off with simply green space?

Sometimes we make a mistake when we talk about green space being to the extreme, where a park should only have grass, a few trees and a couple of benches. What tends to happen is you have people using the park who you don't want using the park, just because it's empty. You need something like, I don't know, an ice cream kiosk, something that means you are going to do more than sit on the bench and look at the water. You can also get a cone, look around, do stuff. That's where you want your cultural venues. That's where we have our performing arts centers, with opera and ballet in one building and a symphony in another building. We have other smaller venues in the downtown area. That's where you want most of your cultural venues, in the urban core. And it's a huge economic impact for the urban core. There is no greater stimulus in my opinion than an investment in the arts. Beyond that, it's important to have things like outdoor concerts, Shakespeare in the park or even just movies in the park—active uses of the park where people do something besides sit on a bench. Any kind of programming that can be done around the waterfront, around the arts, is great. It's almost like that with the Van Wezel, but—I stress—you don't want people just going there to see Shakespeare in the park and then leave. You want to create something that keeps them there.

How important is having strong leadership at the helm of a city?

It is extremely difficult to get things like this done without a strong mayor/leader at the top. I don't mean to pick on anyone in particular, but it is not in the nature of the job for the city manager. You have five commissioners who select a mayor of the year here. Not that it can't be done—anything is possible—but that system is not conducive to the long-term planning and execution of a plan like this. I pissed off a lot of people because I pushed programs through. When we put the museums at our park, the usual cast of characters who show up at City Hall to complain about everything came to complain we shouldn't be putting concrete in a park. I reminded them that the last time I was at Central Park, I also visited The Met. It added to the activation of the park, and I just got it done. The structure you have here makes it very difficult for someone to say, 'I've heard everybody but I don't care what they have to say. I'm just going to get it done, and I'm going to stake my political will and political reputation.' The bureaucracy is risk-averse to begin with. When I got elected, the city manager and top staff were all well-meaning, good, honest people doing their job, but their perspective, having been city employees 20 or 30 years, was to keep the trains running. They were in shock when I expressed my displeasure. To them, the lights were working, the video presentation works, we cleaned up the streets and whatever constituent called to complain, we addressed the complaint. Why aren't you happy? Well, anybody can do that. You don't need me for that. I want to make better, faster, sleek, intelligent trains.

How did you change that culture? Little by little. I brought in private sector people who I convinced to give me a couple years of public service, then go back and make lots of money. A lot of them did. The attitude went from 'No, I can't do it' or 'We'll look into it' to 'Hell yeah, we can.' That started to permeate around the entire organization. You have to have some wins. You tell people we set this goal, then you go back and say, see, I told you we could do it. Then they start believing in themselves. If you are a mayor, and you presumably are doing it for the right reason, which is to get things done, not build some kind of career, then risk doesn't matter. My downside is I don't get re-elected and I go back to practicing law in my law firm and making lots of money, like I was doing before I decided to do this crazy thing. That's a downside I can live with. In the meantime, we're going to do the right thing and push this city forward. **MH**





SEASIDE MODERN

Stofft Cooney Architects create modern-style oasis throughout the Southwest Florida region and beyond.

Stofft Cooney Architects—a widespread firm with a seaside focus—brings coastal, sleek, tranquil elements to its modern designs. With offices in Delray Beach, Naples and Sarasota, partners Randall Stofft and John Cooney have amassed a stellar team of professionals to complete projects throughout communities such as Pelican Bay, Port Royal, Marco Island, Vanderbilt Beach and beyond. Outside of Florida, the firm's geographical specialty areas include coastal properties throughout the U.S. and the Caribbean and the tropics. The firm handles everything from residential and commercial structures to resort-style architecture.

"For over 30 years, we have maintained a philosophy of using history as an influence yet stylizing our own interpretations to appeal to the tropics and tropical elements that surround our homes," John Cooney says. "Regardless of style, my philosophy is to create exemplary, timeless architecture with modern amenities. I believe in working with the clients personally to fulfill their lifestyle needs by creating a home to be enjoyed for generations."

Stofft Cooney's services range from 3D rendering to the drafting and floor planning of energy-efficient, green structures. They do home additions, remodeling and new home construction, and they have earned





and graduated from the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Kent State University. Together, Stofft and Cooney combine influences to make a full spectrum of architectural skills.

One of the firm's most recent projects is the Smith residence—a modern, angular, peacefully-minded family home that went into production in 2015. Some of the most eye-catching aspects of this residence include the selection of unique, natural materials. Keeping the eco-friendly components that make sense in the property's environment was important for the firm, as the family wanted the space to flow from the outside to the inside.

"For this project, we used materials such as chiseled black granite, textured limestone, smooth cypress, glass railings and smooth stucco. This style is a tropical modern home, and it is very distinguished and sophisticated," Cooney says. "Large overhangs create the shade but a lot of glass windows allow for natural light to flood the interior spaces of the home." These glass windows help merge the waterscape with the landscape, which is a paramount goal in Florida homes.

"This waterfront residence was designed for a family to live in year-round. They wanted a warm, modern, zen-like feel. The family enjoys both the interior and the exterior spaces, as we engaged the pool and yard area with a large H-shape plan," Cooney says. "The entry is a wood plank bridge over a black rock pond. At the entry, pilasters are chiseled in smooth black granite. The home also has textured, natural white limestone and smooth cypress highlights used in a more modern palette."

The Smith house embodies the philosophy of Stofft Cooney Architects in that it is a paragon of both com-

such honors as PRISM Awards, Aurora Awards, Pinnacle Awards and the Collier Building Industry Association Sand Dollar Awards. Some impressive examples of their work include the Bella Lago Residence—a West Indies-style joint effort with Gulfshore Homes, Simonsen-Hickok Interiors and Windham Studio Landscape Architects; Mermaids Manor (a French colonial home); and the Bimini Spec (a collaboration on a tropical paradise in old Naples). Other undertakings are hotel and resort structures such as the Seagate Residences; residential projects like Ocean Reef, Golfside and Seaside Manor; senior living communities like Bentley Village; and condo buildings like Harbor Pointe.

"Our firm is known for the beauty and livability of our homes," John Cooney says. "We design custom homes that meet our clients' specific lifestyle needs, wants and desires." Cooney and Stofft draw on their extensive industry backgrounds to build a diverse design portfolio. Chicago-born Stofft was educated at the University of Arizona and practiced architecture at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill before launching Randall Stofft Architects in 1985. Cooney grew up in New York



"I always appreciate the opportunity to design a home for a family that will act as their full-time residence. I enjoyed working with the homeowners on this, they have great taste."

fort and contemporary chicness. Cooney was determined to make the residence a one-of-a-kind, custom space that spoke to the family's needs and lifestyle. He does not subscribe to a cookie-cutter concept of what works. Client collaboration, for his firm, is crucial.

"Our approach is very much a hands-on approach," Cooney says. "I am involved in every design decision throughout the entire process—from the beginning stages of putting a pen to paper for the initial design concepts, to the final proof of a construction punch

list." The firm is consistently invested in every facet of a project to make sure that no detail—no matter how minor—is left unnoticed. Clients always notice the extra effort and return because of it.

"I always appreciate the opportunity to design a home for a family that will act as their full-time residence. I enjoyed working with the homeowners on this project," John Cooney says. "They have great taste." And Stofft Cooney is known for turning great taste into an even greater reality. **MH**

LASTING LEGACY

CELEBRATED ARCHITECT VICTOR LUNDY SOUNDS OFF ON THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF A LIFE SPENT BUILDING FOR OTHERS.

IN THE REALM OF FLORIDA ARCHITECTURE, FEW NAMES LOOM AS LARGE AS VICTOR LUNDY. Heralded as one of the leaders of the Sarasota School of Architecture (a title he resists), Lundy's inspired designs ranged from drive-in churches in Nokomis (demolished) to glassed-in motels in North Port (now on the National Register of Historic Places) to the celebrated (and mostly intact) Blue Pagoda building that housed the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce. Revisiting Sarasota this past November for a celebration in his honor at the 2016 Sarasota MOD Weekend and the opening of a gallery show of his watercolors at Art Center Sarasota, Lundy looks back on his career, the town where he first made his architectural mark and what remains of his work.

SRQ What was it like being back in Sarasota? VICTOR A. LUNDY: I was very moved by the attention—I really didn't expect that at all. I'm so honored by the attention. When I started out, I was going to be an artist—a painter—and then when I became aware of the art of architecture, I quickly adapted that. It seemed a much richer form of art than hiding in a metal building and facing myself doing painting and drawing all alone. Architecture was that, plus involvement with people and history and cities and all of that. Architecture became my art form and it's the quality of the buildings that I produced that brought the notoriety.

And this is where you received your first architectural commission, right? I received my first commission as a consequence of a painting I submitted in a competition. I won the first prize and Karl Bickel, a former head of United Press, was on the jury and when he found out I was an architect he called me and said, "Lundy, I hear you're an architect. We have a beautiful site, we're thinking of building the new chamber of commerce building there and I'd appreciate it if you went there tomorrow and visualized an abstraction of what you would build there." So the next day I showed up, I spent the day with an easel and I did four huge paintings, which were exhibited. The consequence of that—I received my first commission.

Did you get a chance to see the town when you visited? Did anything stand out? No, I didn't have the chance. And because of what has been done to sort of spoil most of the buildings I created there, I definitely avoid seeing them again. I kept busy and didn't have the chance to see Sarasota except recognizing that it's become a completely different city than the one I remember.



Opposite page: An uncredited photo of Victor A. Lundy in uniform, taken in 1944. **This page, left to right:** Sketches made by Lundy while serving in the European theater of World War II in 1944, *Soldier Wearing Helmet and Glasses: 1944* and *Part of the Atlantic Wall, Quineville 6 miles from L. Co. hurt here, 6 killed: September 21, 1944.*

How does it feel to see your buildings changed after the fact?

Frankly, absolutely devastated. Because I had this reputation as being an artist as well as an architect, these little churches communicated with me. These were very modest, low-budget congregations. They weren't very sophisticated and their budgets were small, so I did the best I could. None of them could receive air conditioning at the time—there wasn't the budget for it—and so that was to happen in the future. So in the original buildings, I worked out large sliding glass doors that let breezes in and I had for every project a strategy for air conditioning later when they could afford it. Well later, when I had left Sarasota—this is why God invented the telephone—when they wanted air conditioning all they had to do was call me and I would have flown down and helped in any way I could. Instead, they hired local architects whose job it was also to call me and say, "Hey Victor, we don't want to ruin what you did. You better come down." Like the fellowship hall at St. Paul's, which was my favorite early building—I hope I never meet the architect, but he put a huge four-foot-by-four-foot wood air conditioning duct flowing through the space and new lighting fixtures from Home Depot. And I had a sophisticated plan for doing the air conditioning machinery outside and coming indoors through nicely designed vertical sculpture elements that would distribute air without ruining the space. So I've been horrified by what happened to almost all of these early buildings and that's why on these subsequent trips to Sarasota I just avoid seeing. It's just too painful for me to see them in their current condition. At first I resisted coming down but I was really touched by Janet [Minker]. She was so wonderful over the phone and their feelings were so sympathetic to mine and they generously included my son, wife and grandson.

Is it possible for you to revisit these old projects? Well it's pretty hard though to restore them to their original form. That's why Donna Kacmar is doing a book on my work, which will record the original images and which I'm happy is going to happen.

Is watercolor something you've always pursued as well?

I've always painted. When my architecture commissions were either spare or didn't exist, I've always drawn and painted and so that's always happened. I competed for the Rotch Traveling Scholarship offered by the Boston Society of Architects, which is a yearly competition really between Harvard and MIT, and I won and that gave me the opportunity to take the grand tour of Europe and I recorded all of that in formal watercolors, which weren't shown in Sarasota but they exist at the Library of Congress, which has all of my stuff. I was originally going to be a painter, and I received a scholarship to New York University. But when I discovered they had a school of art and architecture, I was entirely smitten. Architecture was my art form and they had a distinguished Beaux Arts professor from Paris and I had two years of that training. Then Pearl Harbor happened and I ended up an infantry sergeant in Patton's army in World War II. When I came back that school had disappeared and I went to Harvard University where Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer were my teachers.

You've said before that sketching, particularly a building, helps you to understand and grasp it. What do you mean by that?

In a way, it's a result of my early Beaux Arts training. I had the same early training as Louis Kahn, a personal friend, where students were isolated one from another, the problem to be studied was given to them and they had something like three to four hours to come up with an idea for the building they were going to study in detail for three or four months. All of us became pretty adept at drawing an idea, which had to be adhered to. So whenever I had a new architectural commission, I would go to the site—sometimes I actually slept at the site—and I would do watercolor paintings of first impressions of some sculptural idea I'd like to do there, much like what I did for the Chamber of Commerce building called the Blue Pagoda. And I still do that.



Does that apply to the sketches done overseas of your fellow soldiers in Patton's army? Did drawing them help you capture them or what you were going through? Those were done on very small five-by-seven-inch sketchbooks—small enough to stick in my shirt pocket—and they were just a personal record of what I was going through. And because I draw pretty fast, sometimes I would draw something while I was moving. Just eight of those have survived and they're also at the Library of Congress. I had a whole bunch of others, but they were unfortunately in my personal stuff which was stored somewhere and ripped off and stolen by GIs. They still exist somewhere.

Architecture feels so solid next to watercolor that they almost seem like opposites. Is there a reason you were attracted to these two media? I'm both. I have such respect for aspiring artists that to call myself an artist is like calling myself a saint, but I'm half an artist and half architect and they're one. They're not separate. Whenever I study a project, I draw constantly. Not necessarily watercolor, but the drawing and the painting are integral to forming my architectural work. I suppose it's innate. I have a three-dimensional sculptural sense of things, and so my architecture isn't all boxes. There are three-dimensional shapes and forms to it and it comes as a consequence of how I draw and do architecture and they're one process.

What does it mean to work towards the irreducible? Whenever I start a project or frankly every day when I'm going to draw something, I use rolls of yellow or white tissue paper and just sketch something and I keep going until it's just a perfect thing of what I have in mind. I heard that description from a personal book that Matisse wrote about how he started every day working towards the irreducible of a thought he had and sometimes he did as many as 30 drawings of the same thing until it was as perfect as he could get it—an irreducible image. In a way, that's exactly what I do. I discard all the extraneous and get to the irreducible of any idea I'm working on.

You've made a career of exploration, trying new ideas. With that in mind, what are your thoughts on preservation and Sarasota's attachment to the Sarasota School of Architecture? Number one: there wasn't a Sarasota School of Architecture. We were just a bunch of guys who happened to be working in the city at the same time. I didn't belong to any group and I was always known as a lone wolf. My buildings are different because that's my nature. I don't just do box after box—I have a three-dimensional sculptural sense of things. For example, at the New York World's Fair [in 1964], my project was the toilets and hot dog stands and out of the blue I came up with those air-supported structures. Very low budget and they were an enormous success. Philip Johnson called me after that and he and Lev Zetlin were sort of pissed off because for \$6000 each—that's all they cost and I did 10 of them—they received more attention than his multimillion dollar project.

This page: Fontainebleau: March 13, 1949, watercolor by Victor Lundy. **Opposite page, top to bottom:** Sketches made by Lundy while serving in the European theater of World War II in 1944, "Kentucky" Finney Tower: October 31, 1944 and Bourg de Lestre: September 21, 1944. Conceptual watercolor by Victor Lundy of what would become the Blue Pagoda building. Background, "Untitled" watercolor by Victor Lundy.

What is your feeling upon completing a project? What you're touching on is my total distress at what happened to my projects. When I left them, I had used up the client's meager money and on a couple projects I waived my fee to help do as much as I could. Completing was part of my involvement with every thing I've ever done. In a way, with the other projects that were respected by clients, I got each client to a point of it being irreducible and my ideal of excellence. I was so pleased when I finished these projects, but then I was so nervous about what might happen to them. I made people laugh in Sarasota when I said I wish they wouldn't even use the buildings so they wouldn't ruin them.

Have your thoughts on architecture changed since you began? I'm very much a man of my time. I don't belong to the computer age. My computer has always been the ebony pencil. If I were to start practicing now, I don't have a computer and I would have to be educated in its use. I've had some experience when, years after Sarasota, I was design director at HKS [Architects] in Dallas, a huge firm, and they had one of the top computer systems in the country. I would draw a curved line and then I would have to wait until the computer guys caught up. And somehow I always liked my freehand line better than what the computer interpretation of it was. In that sense, I'd need some learning if I were to start a practice, because I'm very aware that this is a different time, but I'm still alive and what I feel and my philosophy of art and architecture remains. My sense of how I would approach a problem hasn't changed.

If you could, what would you tell your younger self as he's starting out? What I am is out there. People who know me through the years say I've never changed. My advice would be to follow what I actually did in my own life: to be always totally aware of what's happening and the progress of the world and how different it is; to always be aware and to adjust in intelligent ways to the movement of history and what's developing and happening beyond one's immediate time. MH



SPIRIT OF PLACE

Timothy Del Vescovo of Del Vescovo Design Group reveals his clients' passions by cultivating a design approach suited to their particular needs.

A creative glint in his eye, Timothy Del Vescovo, Principal of Del Vescovo Design Group, tells us about the moment that sparks his design process—after hearing from the client, it's time to hear from the site. A critical part of the design process involves Del Vescovo sitting at the property with a sketchpad. "Every site has something unique to say," he says. "I look at the view, the ocean and the palm trees. Maybe a pair of trees perfectly frames the view. Whoever planted those trees, even if they didn't know it at the time, the value and magic of the space were relayed and captured in that decision. Designing the right structure of the space is the continuation of this process of discovery—there is a Latin term for it, *genius loci*, meaning the spirit of the place."



Above and right: Del Vescovo Design Group was selected as the Design Architecture firm for The Courtyard at Citrus which follows New Urbanism philosophies. They are collaborating with Hoyt Architects on this mixed-use, multi-phase project.

"A space that's true architecture is more than just construction."





For Del Vescovo, owner of Del Vescovo Design Group, architecture is most definitely an art and an inherently functional art. A clients' needs, goals and budget are all factors that must be deliberated and met. It's actually those guiding criteria that Del Vescovo believes differentiate architecture from sculpture. "A space that's true architecture is more than just construction. It transcends construction because of the art form, while spaces that are purely sculptural and don't function properly are not architectural."

Del Vescovo Design Group values the relationship with the client as a precious building block of the architectural process. The firm digs deep into a client's requirements both now and for the future. "There is a great relationship you build with

your clients. We need to understand how they live their lives and what's important to them so that we can make the right decisions on ergonomics and spatial adjacencies," says Del Vescovo. Once the pragmatic elements are understood, then the creativity of how to service clients' lives through architecture, begins to emerge, he says.

"The client's choices are neither right nor wrong," says Del Vescovo. "It comes down to one's lifestyle." Simple distinctions make for dramatically different usage patterns by the clients. The placement of a dining room must be informed by the knowledge that a particular client wants to entertain and interact with seated guests while others are cooking in the kitchen, while another client may wish to have a formal dining space separated from the kitchen entirely. The Del

Vescovo Design Group creates distinctive design fingerprints that often recur in their work in the use of natural materials. They are known for their expertise in bridging the exterior and interior spaces, an important skill in connecting the beauty of the tropical outdoors to a living space. The beauty of their homes are paralleled only by the integrity of construction that gives them the fortitude to also withstand the extreme weather that can come with living in Florida. "If there was a hurricane, I would want to be in one of our buildings for safety—the strength of a bunker, but disguised as a light and airy space."

Del Vescovo describes this approach as "blurring the line of the building's envelope, having an ambiguity between the inside and the outside." He achieves this effect by implementing design techniques that maintain a visual continuity such as carrying the same flooring material from inside to outside. He describes using materials that are sealed and usable outdoors and then applying the same materials in an unsealed state indoors. Attentiveness to modern technology allows for creative solutions. Del Vescovo researches lighting that can serve both indoor and outdoor functions, offering yet another natural visual bridge. Modern windows systems allow the hardware to be buried in the floor and ceiling, "so your eye does not trip over the structure of the window on its way to the outside."

"Our clients, especially those who have built other homes and projects, are excited to experience our process of uncovering what their real needs are," says Del Vescovo. "We are honored that we get to help our clients and their families realize a lifestyle that they thought was only in their imagination." When the house is built and the family moves in, Del Vescovo hopes they call him up and say, "This is exactly what was in my dreams, and I can't believe I get to live here." **MH**

"We are honored that we get to help our clients and their families realize a lifestyle that they thought was only in their imagination."



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