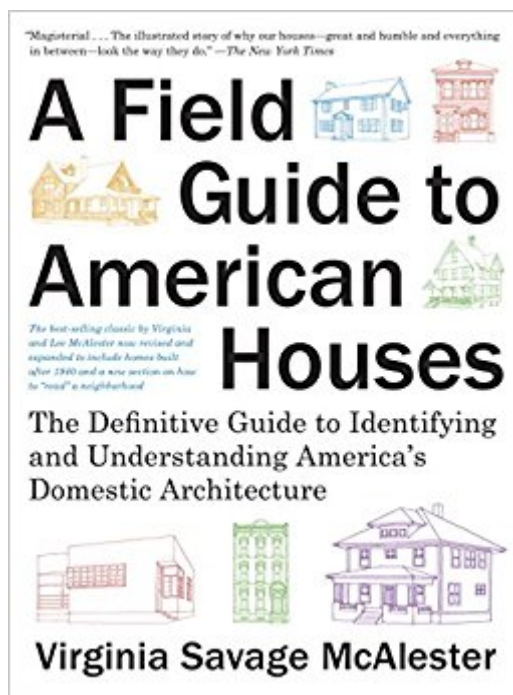


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A Field Guide To American Houses: The Definitive Guide To Identifying And Understanding America's Domestic Architecture



Synopsis

For the house lover and the curious tourist, for the house buyer and the weekend stroller, for neighborhood preservation groups and for all who want to know more about their community -- here, at last, is a book that makes it both easy and pleasurable to identify the various styles and periods of American domestic architecture. Concentrating not on rare landmarks but on typical dwellings in ordinary neighborhoods all across the United States -- houses built over the past three hundred years and lived in by Americans of every social and economic background -- the book provides you with the facts (and frame of reference) that will enable you to look in a fresh way at the houses you constantly see around you. It tells you -- and shows you in more than 1,200 illustrations -- what you need to know in order to be able to recognize the several distinct architectural styles and to understand their historical significance. What does that cornice mean? Or that porch? That door? When was this house built? What does its style say about the people who built it? You'll find the answers to such questions here. This is how the book works: Each of thirty-nine chapters focuses on a particular style (and its variants). Each begins with a large schematic drawing that highlights the style's most important identifying features. Additional drawings and photographs depict the most common shapes and the principal subtypes, allowing you to see at a glance a wide range of examples of each style. Still more drawings offer close-up views of typical small details -- windows, doors, cornices, etc. -- that might be difficult to see in full-house pictures. The accompanying text is rich in information about each style -- describing in detail its identifying features, telling you where (and in what quantity) you're likely to find examples of it, discussing all of its notable variants, and revealing its origin and tracing its history. In the book's introductory chapters you'll find invaluable general discussions of house-building materials and techniques ("Structure"), house shapes ("Form"), and the many traditions of architectural fashion ("Style") that have influenced American house design through the past three centuries. A pictorial key and glossary help lead you from simple, easily recognized architectural features -- the presence of a tile roof, for example -- to the styles in which that feature is likely to be found. This eBook edition has been optimized for screen.

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Customer Reviews

I always wanted to renovate an old house and purchased a beautiful Colonial Revival home built in 1915. My architect referred to the previous edition of this guide often during the renovation of my home. The new version proves without a doubt that the author is one of the nation's foremost authorities on architecture. There are so many beautiful illustrations that help people who learn visually like me, link terms with the actual architectural elements. The new guide has been updated to include all styles up to the present day. Not only is this book a must for students of architecture, but anyone who owns a house, is interested in buying a house, or is in the industry. Truly a masterpiece.

My dearly beloved is a big fan of houses. He loves to study the architecture and details of housing everywhere we go. So, when I saw this book reviewed in the Wall Street Journal, I knew it would be perfect for him. At the beginning of the book, there are charts with diagrams to help the reader identify the type of house he/she is looking at. For example, a sketch of a roof with a 2 or 3 word description, and the book recommends looking at one or more type of house to see which it is. However, it's also very good for reading, with chapters on the layouts of early towns and so forth. There is also a section on the housing used by various Native American groups. Each chapter about a style of houses includes a few pages of history, etc, before sketches, details about characteristics of the type, and photos of actual houses of each style from various parts of the country. Good for a long reading session, but it's also a fast and easy reference for when you just want to know what you've just seen.

I love old houses so this review is based on that fact only (not an architectural student). This book is wonderful. It discusses and illustrates the styles of houses in the early days of our country to the present. There are detailed descriptions along with a plethora of photographs of all types of houses, my favorites being the Queen Anne, Tudor, and Gothic Revival (just a personal preference.) I think this is an amazing reference book, I would recommend it to anyone that loves old houses. In my case, because I was unfamiliar with a lot of the technical terms in McAlester's book, I also bought "Old House Dictionary", which helped immensely. Love this book.

This is probably the most-used resource book I have right now. I have the earlier edition and this is essentially the same thing with expanded sections of styles and sub-styles. Many pictures are updated, many more are the same. I especially like the line drawings at the start of each chapter that identify the key elements for a particular style. This book has been very helpful for my current client- I'm identifying the architectural styles of hundreds of non-historic, usually obscure style structures. Those key elements have been great to reference quickly since I usually have a pretty good idea what each structure might be. Because of this book, there are about fifteen structures in another state that my client is considering preserving now that we have identified something unique about them. As a preservationist, that gets me jazzed up!

For anyone interested in identifying American Architecture, this is the book to keep with you when traveling or just walking through neighborhoods. The hundreds of photographs and clean precise drawings will help you identify any style of architecture you happen to come across. There is an overview of styles, from 1600 to the present [1980s when the book was written] , which covers the fashions and trends of buildings, along with the anatomy of the structures. A pictorial key and glossary is included in this section. From there the book is divided into 5 chapters: Colonial, Romantic, Victorian, Eclectic and Contemporary [1940 to 1980s]. I have worn out 2 copies of this book and now am on my 3rd. The Field Guide to American Houses is like a dear friend who has traveled many informative miles with me over the years. I highly recommend it.

Great for getting a sense of things that have changed in our history: how families live, the cities vs. the suburbs, the advent of things like TV and car ownership, and stylistic trends. Tons of photographs. The drawings help boil things down to their essence but as an architect, I wish they were a little better (less cartoony, perhaps more rigorous analysis of proportions and dimensions, more floor

plans, etc.).

While I do not work in architecture, I have always had a passion for it. For years, I have been searching for a book like this! This is a comprehensive guide to all things domestic architecture of America! Living in San Francisco, I love how I now have some knowledge about the varying types of architecture throughout the city. I can identify and discern between different time periods and design methods, which I love! It also makes a great coffee table book that I love to revisit time and time again.

Want the best book on this topic that you can buy? This is it! Extraordinary research delivers priceless information about the architecture of the American house. It covers nearly everything, from Native American huts to Mid-century Modernism, the text includes topics that not only describe the styles but how the architecture evolved and was influenced by external circumstances. Interiors are not included in the book because it focuses on the structure and overall form and exterior architectural detail of the houses. It's not a book that you sit down and read, it is one that you refer to for a lifetime.

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