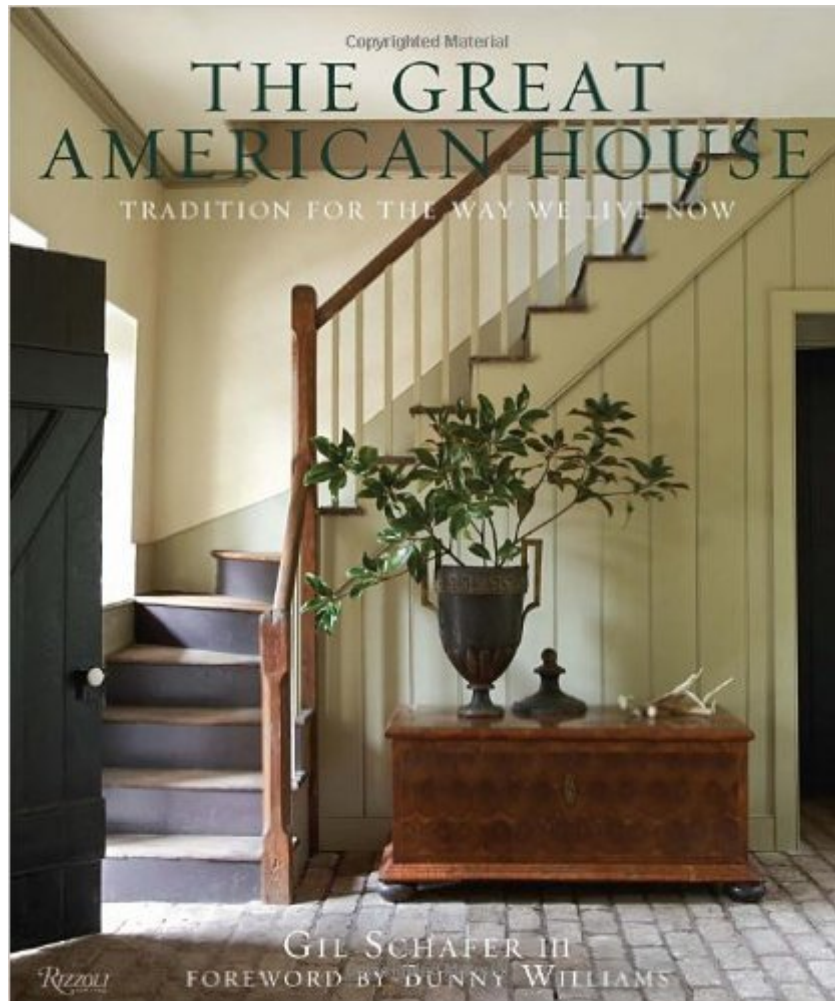


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# The Great American House: Tradition For The Way We Live Now



## Synopsis

Acclaimed architect Gil Schafer illustrates how he blends classical architecture, interior decoration, and landscape to create homes with a feeling of history. As a traditional architect, Gil Schafer specializes in building new "old" houses as well as renovating historic homes. His work takes the best of American historic and classical architecture—its detailed moldings and harmonious proportions—and updates it, retaining its character and detail while simultaneously reworking it to be more in tune with the way we live now—comfortable, practical, family-oriented. In his first book, Schafer covers the three essential cornerstones of creating a great traditional house: architecture, landscape, and decoration. He discusses the important interplay between the interior architecture and the fabrics, furniture, and wall treatments. In-depth profiles build on these essays, including Schafer's own new "old" house in the Hudson Valley; 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. Filled with hundreds of interior and detail shots, *The Great American House* is an invaluable resource for anyone who loves old houses and traditional design.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It is hard to overstate my enthusiasm about the work of Gil Schafer, architect. His projects are exceptionally well planned and beautifully built. I impatiently waited all summer for this book of his houses to be published and it was more than worth the wait. Being a Rizzoli publication, the book

itself is a magnificent product with high paper quality and outstanding picture size and clarity. It has a certain heft that tells you that no material shortcuts were taken. The content is exactly what I expected; a fascinating narrative from Schafer on his architectural journey and the philosophy which guides his designs. It is so refreshing to see such beautiful classical architecture being created in the 21st century. There are four chapters focusing on particular buildings; Schafer's own Hudson Valley country house, which is a fine classic Greek Revival temple; a new traditional country house; a renovation of an early 20th century Nashville home and the staggering restoration of Gatewood, a phenomenal antebellum townhouse in Charleston, South Carolina, which with the lightest, most sensitive touch, is now fully functional for the modern age. This book immediately vaults to the top five amongst a pretty extensive architectural library. For the reader interested in classical architecture this is required reading. Oh that I was in a tax bracket to commission a custom designed home of the first order, Gil Schafer would be my architect.

This writer and architect is brilliant! He is a great writer!! He explains how he designs houses and why. This is rare. The last "rave review" (and I do rave when I find a really great book) was about "Villa" by John Saladino. Both of these different, and brilliant architects are able to explain why they design the spaces that they do! In understandable language to a layperson! It makes sense; and they explain it! That to me; is an additional rare talent to add to the talent that they possess as architects! (and in John's case; also an "interior designer") This is a really great book! I think the best thing about "classical architecture"; (in our age of "hideous", my opinion, of course, "McMansions" despoiling the countryside in every state); this man explains why classical architecture makes so much sense.....and why to go there if you are building a house! As a decorator; for many years, I have been asked to look at "McMansions"; and asked if I can "make this cozy"? My answer, always; unfortunately, is : "No, I cannot." Because it is impossible. The proportions are wrong, the ceilings are too high, the windows are all wrong, on and on. And they are simply unworkable as "comfortable family houses"; which is my goal as a decorator! This book may contribute to "Stop the Madness!!" I can only hope! It is a treasure!

It really doesn't get any better than this. Gil Schafer's new book does everything that one hopes it will do, and with considerable polish. From his discussions of his background and design philosophy to descriptions of the planning and execution of the four projects presented, it's obvious that Mr. Schafer is a master of his craft and loves what he does. This volume showcases his incredible skill in handling 21st century spaces in a traditional American idiom, and his perception of the details that

imbue new, functional construction with the look and feel of age and provenance. Aside from a typo in the book's forward mentioned by another reviewer, it's obvious that this one had a great deal of attention on its way to press. The presentation is neat and tight, the projects thoroughly photographed and, wonder of all, nothing is discussed in the prose that we can't see in the photos. Add to that the work of some first-string interior designers, and this is one book that I couldn't put down - and to which I have returned repeatedly with enthusiasm. From the comprehensive photography and floor and site plans, to the sensitive and expository text, the reader is only left wanting for a sequel. Hopefully Mr. Schafer won't keep us waiting too long.

This is one of the best design/architecture books in recent memory... I received it several days ago and cannot put it down. Beautiful!

this is by far the best book i have bought...perhaps ever.i have read the book from cover to cover several times.i have always had a great interest in architecture and thisbook really feeds the appetite. a book everyone who buys ahome in one of our suburban subdivisions should read prior to purchase. i hope that gil schaefer will write another great book.p.h.reed

The fundamentals Gil Schafer teaches in this book spoke very deeply to me. It gave me a solid understanding of design principles that I had always appreciated, but had never fully articulated on my own. It also goes without saying that the photographs and the examples of his work are reason alone to buy this book. The best architectural book that I own.

I own and have read over 75 design books over the past several years, and by far this is one of the best. I truly admire architects who design real houses with rooms where furniture can actually be placed. The photos are excellent and this entire book is of such high quality. Both the interior and exterior shots are incredible, and reflect the full design concept of the home from landscaping to interior design. My only regret is that I can't afford Mr. Schafer to design and build my home!!! I would not recommend this book to those who favor contemporary design or the "austere" mid-century modern look, unless they are looking to move away from that design concept.

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