

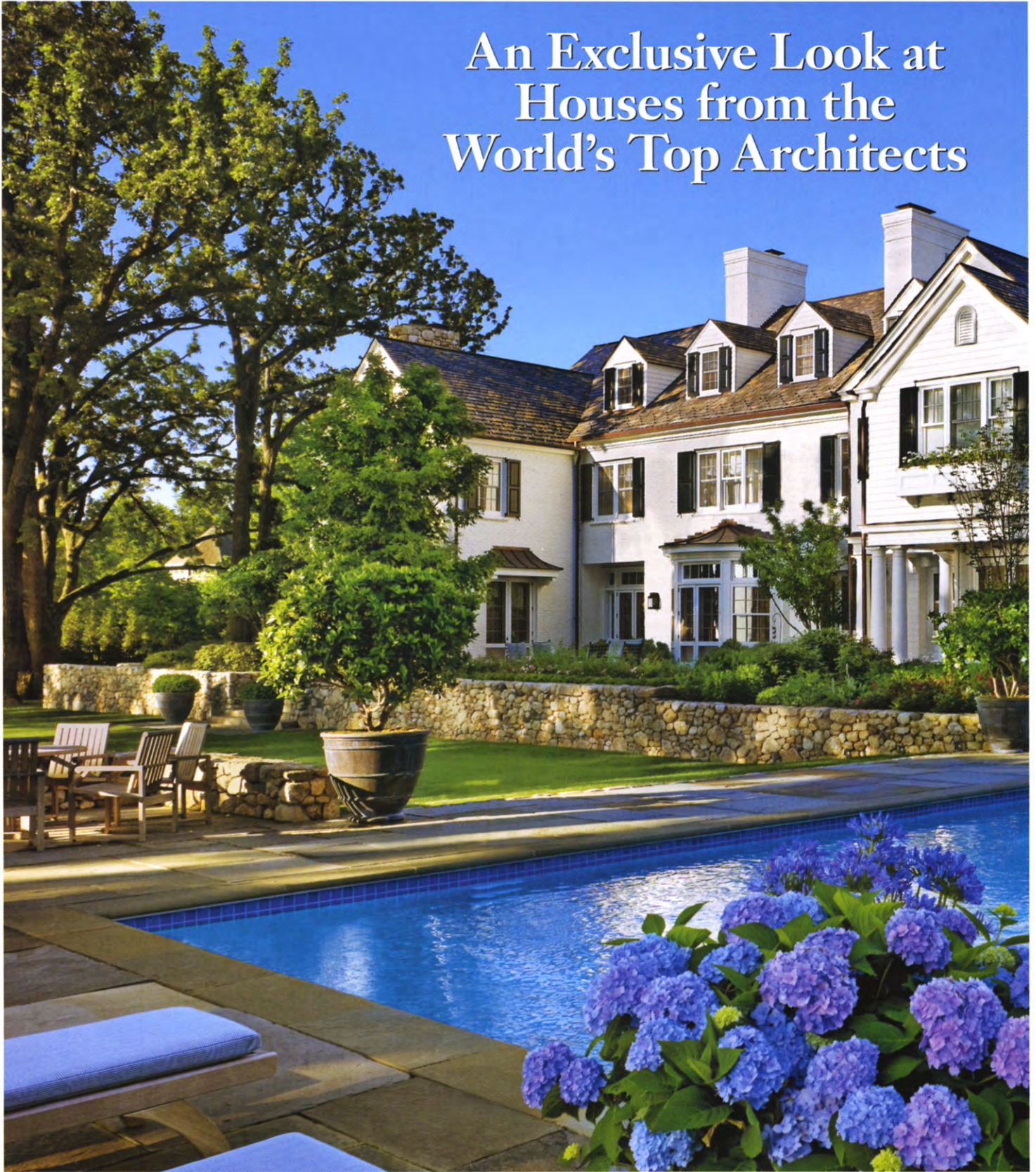
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF DESIGN

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THE ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

An Exclusive Look at
Houses from the
World's Top Architects



ANGLES OF REPOSE

A HAMPTONS BEACH HOUSE FINDS
TRANQUILITY IN MINIMAL VOLUMES AND PARED DETAILS





"It's modern but with a substantial quality; it's not slick," architect Alexander Gorlin says of a beach house he designed in the Hamptons. "It needed a presence to it that would stand up to the ocean." In the entrance façade, Afromosia wood volumes "pop" out of two-inch-thick Bulgarian limestone. "The size and thickness of the limestone is surprising for a residential project. It's built like a small museum."

Architecture by Alexander Gorlin, FAIA

Interior Design by David Scott, ASID

Text by Judith Thurman/Photography by Michael Moran

If you walk along a beach almost anywhere in the Western world, you are struck by the variety of houses dotting the coastline. A gingerbread mansion stands beside a tea pavilion, and next door to a rosy stucco villa is a white box with glass walls. Beach architecture is, essentially, an exercise in fantasy—perhaps because the first dream house that most of us build is a sand castle. And every sand castle is unique—an idiosyncratic ideal of home.

When a New York couple with two teenagers bought several acres of choice beachfront in the Hamptons, they lived, for a while, in the spec house that a developer had plonked on the property. Their interior designer, David Scott, gave the rooms some personality—temporarily—because they all admitted that the architecture lacked distinction. As the seasons changed, they came to know the patterns of the light and weather, and of their own leisure, so when the time was ripe to build a residence worthy of its site, the wife could describe her ideal succinctly: “A spa-like family retreat with an upside-down floor plan and a feeling of openness and serenity. It had to be flexible enough for intimate entertaining or large gatherings. And low maintenance was essential: I’m obsessively practical.”

The husband was in favor of a shingled manor in the classic Hamptons style, but Scott and the wife both lobbied for something more original—and of its century. Scott recently designed the couple’s Fifth Av-

enue apartment in an urbane style that offset the opulence of prewar detail with contemporary furniture and art. “I’m never averse to mixing periods,” he says. “I’m an eclectic soul, but my true love is for Modernism, and among the younger masters of the genre, I have always admired Alex Gorlin. When I ran into Alex in Miami, visiting the Gorlin—the apartment tower he designed for a planned community [see *Architectural Digest*, September 2006]—I realized that his work had precisely the balance of warmth and rigor that my clients were seeking.” Gorlin, the prizewinning architect of town houses, lofts, schools and places of worship, but also of innovative inner-city housing, describes his style—and credo of service—as “humane minimalism.”

Gorlin’s 12,000-square-foot beach house for the couple sits on a sandy rise between the ocean and the bay, and from their rooftop terrace, the family and their guests enjoy a rare privilege: of watching the sun rise and set from the same lounge chairs. When Gorlin first saw the views, he thought, he says, “of Janus, the Roman god of doorways and beginnings, who has two heads that gaze in opposite directions.” That image inspired his plan for a residence with two radically different façades that seem, he notes, “to belong to different houses.” A passing beachcomber sees a monumental, one-story rectangle of white limestone whose planes echo the horizon. A zinc visor cantilevered from



Light filters into the living room through an open stairwell, a light monitor and a wall of windows. “The sun rarely comes in directly,” notes Gorlin. For the interiors, designer David Scott, who worked closely with Gorlin from the outset, echoed the stone and wood tones of the architecture. “The landscape determined our palette,” Scott says. Holly Hunt club chair fabric and sofa.





ABOVE: For the master bedroom, Scott designed the bed “to feel like a floating island,” he explains. The side table is also his design. Headboard fabric, J. Robert Scott. Duvet fabric, Schumacher. Bergamo wall drapery fabric. Barlow Tyrie terrace furniture. **OPPOSITE ABOVE:** The cabana. **OPPOSITE:** The first-floor plan.

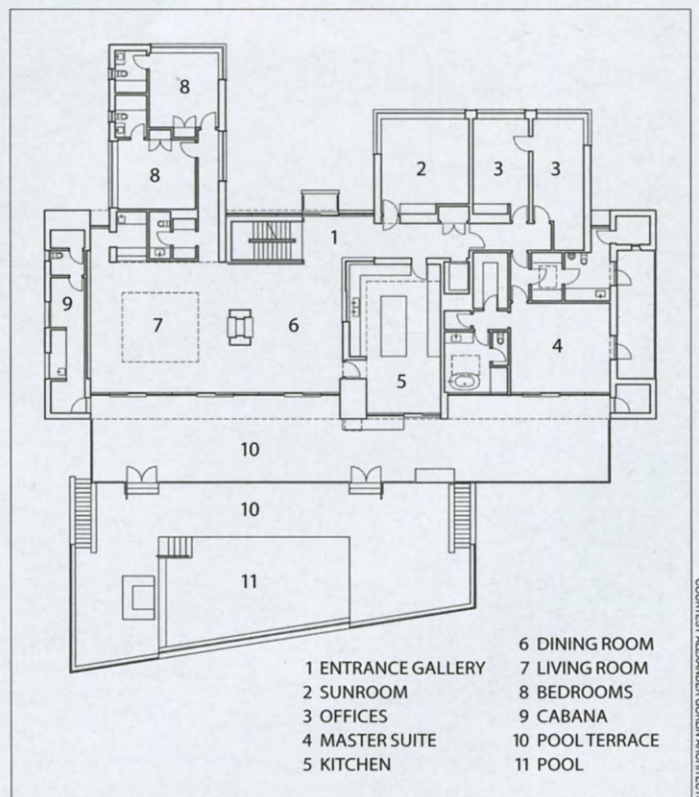
the roof creates what Gorlin calls a sun loggia. It shades a wall of glass punctuated by the door and window frames like a Mondrian grid, and it diffuses the glare in the main living area and the master suite, which open to a pool deck that hides the foundation. A massive stone edifice thus seems to float weightlessly between the sky and water. As Gorlin puts it, “You pay the mighty ocean the humble compli-

ment of extreme simplicity.”

The entrance to the house, on the bay side, is a two-story gallery that bisects the main volume. Jutting from the limestone façade are two extensions of bronze-colored Afromosia wood that, from a distance, resemble the open drawers of a bureau. One is cantilevered from the second story; the other is a two-story wing. They house, respectively, two offices and a sun-

room, and bedrooms for the clients’ teenagers. Gorlin designed a flat roof to accommodate a deck but relieved its expanse by treating the angled skylights and nautically inspired chimneys as pieces of sculpture.

The interiors and the architecture evolved in tandem, Scott says, “with constant, creative back and forth.” He, Gorlin and the clients flew to Italy to choose the stone together,



“and four pairs of eyes were always focused on a shared vision.” The rectilinear planes of Gorlin’s blueprint called, in Scott’s view, “for strong, sculptural furniture and poetic detail—like Michele Oka Doner’s metal grillwork, of trompe l’oeil coral, for the heating and cooling vents, and a dining table by John Housmand, which was cast in aluminum from a giant slab of oak. Texture is my signature as a

designer,” he concludes, “and I brought nature indoors with organic forms and materials that impart a sense of richness to the décor and soften its masculine edge, a bit, without compromising its purity.” The beauty of a work of art is the expression of fidelity to an ideal. In describing the outcome of their labors, Scott, Gorlin and their clients all, independently, use the same word: *seamless*. □

COURTESY ALEXANDER GORLIN ARCHITECTS

A massive stone edifice seems to float weightlessly between the sky and water. As Gorlin puts it, "You pay the mighty ocean the humble compliment of extreme simplicity."



The rear terrace "is a modern interpretation of a traditional sun porch," says Gorlin, who designed a deep zinc canopy to ease, he says, an "age-old problem: best view, worst sun." Perry Guillot landscaped the site. The outdoor furniture is by Richard Schultz.



A listing of the architects and designers featured in this issue



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