

CALIFORNIA HOMES

The Magazine of Architecture
The Arts & Distinctive Design

LIVING ON THE COAST

SAN FRANCISCO
MALIBU
NEWPORT
BEACH
LA JOLLA

\$6 US \$7.50 CAN JUNE 2006



DESIGNER
PROFILE WITH
MARTHA ANGUS



Architectural Heirlooms



The Firm of Hablinski-Manion, Influenced By The Great Architects Of The Past, Builds Modern Day Mansions To Last

TEXT BY LYNN MORGAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERHARD PFEIFFER

William Hablinski and Richard Manion, the principals of Beverly Hills based Hablinski-Manion Architecture, LLC, are almost like magicians conjuring both the past and the future at the same time. Their designs are firmly grounded in history yet balanced with modern convenience. They build homes intended to last for future generations, homes meant to be preserved.

Working in Southern California, it would seem that the kind of deeply formal architecture the partners specialize in would have a limited audience. Still, over the last eleven years, the firm of Hablinski-Manion Architecture has grown and their work also is represented in Las Vegas, Hawaii, Texas, and from Malibu to Indonesia. They founded their firm in 1994, and now have a staff of twenty five.

They are fluent in all the enduring styles of European and American architecture: neoclassical, Georgian, Italianate, Spanish Colonial, and Beaux Arts. They are influenced by the great residential architects of the past, including George Washington Smith, who designed many of the grand Spanish houses of Santa Barbara and Montecito; Addison Mizner who built mansions in Palm Beach in the Twenties and Thirties, and Richard Morris Hunt, the principal architect of the Gilded Age mansions of Newport Rhode Island, as well as by their own personal mentors.

"I was unsure whether I wanted to be an architect or an architectural historian," Richard Manion says about his studies at Columbia University. "I was greatly influenced by my teacher, Robert M. Steam. It was a deciding factor."

William Hablinski, the senior of the two, also had an academic mentor at the University of Texas who guided him towards his ultimate specialty. "Dewey Alexander was an influential art history professor," he says. "He inspired me to specialize in traditional and European inspired architecture." Their scholarly backgrounds are key to the aesthetic vision of the firm which maintains an extensive library of architectural history from the Renaissance to the present.

While fidelity to classic styles and aesthetic values is important to Hablinski and Manion, they are not in the business of creating replicas of French chateaux or Palladian



OPPOSITE: Garden facade of a house in Beverly Hills inspired by the Grand 16th and 17th century Italian villas on the Veneto. TOP LEFT: Front facade of a Beverly Hills Residence inspired by 16th century central and northern Italian villas with a grand pedimented entry portico. ABOVE: Main Stair of a Beverly Hills Residence that wraps around the entry space with vaulted ceilings and a cast stone balustrade inspired by the 1920s California Mediterranean architecture.