



Maurice Fatio: Palm Beach Architect (The American Architect)

Kim I. Mockler

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The ultimate winter playground on a sun-drenched tropical island accessible only by the Florida East Coast Railway or ocean-going yacht, Palm Beach was created as an exclusive haven for the pursuit of pleasure. Developed mainly during the flamboyant 1920s, Palm Beach was different from the storied northern resorts, such as Newport, Bar Harbor or the Hamptons. It was exotic, extravagant, and ultra modern a place where bankers mixed freely with gamblers and bootleggers, plutocrats with Ziegfeld showgirls and society doyennes. The glamorous winter houses and exclusive clubs, designed by its early style-setting architects, provided a swanky backdrop for seasons of carefree recreation, parties, dinners, and dancing under the stars. MAURICE FATIO, PALM BEACH ARCHITECT tells the story of the prominent society architect whose many elegant buildings remain as much-admired Florida icons. Born and trained in Switzerland, Fatio (1897-1943) came to the United States to study American building and design methods in the early 1920s, and never left. Shortly after opening his practice in New York City, he was called to Palm Beach to design Mediterranean-style castles, British Colonial mansions, and modernist villas on spectacular sites with water views as far as the eye could see. Fatio built over 200 houses in Florida. MAURICE FATIO examines in detail 26 finest examples of the architect s designs, built between 1927 and 1939, including Otto Kahn s southern Oheka, Harold Vanderbilt s Eastover, Harrison Williams Blythedunes, Consuelo Vanderbilt s Casa Alva, and E.F. Hutton s second Palm Beach house, Four Winds. Illustrated with 300 period and new photographs and multiple floor plans drawn especially for this work, the book also includes a catalogue of Fatio s nearly 160 residential commissions in the back. Brief narratives highlight the history of each building and the clients who commissioned them.

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