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Paul R. Williams: Classic Hollywood Style



Synopsis

Over a career spanning six decades, architect Paul Revere Williams came to define what gracious living looked like for the Hollywood elite. Williams mastered an array of architectural idioms—including American Colonial, Spanish Mediterranean, English Tudor, French Normandy, Art Deco, and, of course, the California ranch style—to create the sophisticated yet understated showplaces that are featured here in all new full-color photography. Among the most celebrated architects of his generation, Williams was also the first African-American member of the American Institute of Architects, and he was deeply involved in the black community in Los Angeles and in African-American affairs nationally. Williams moved among many worlds, and with celebrity clients such as Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Tyrone Power, and Barbara Stanwyck, as well as clients who made Hollywood run behind the scenes, not to mention members of Los Angeles high society, Williams left his mark in the city's most glamorous and exclusive enclaves—Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Bel Air, and the Hollywood Hills. *Paul R. Williams: Classic Hollywood Style* is a dazzling tour of this prolific architect's most spectacular houses, by his granddaughter Karen Hudson, with a special focus on their roles not only as places for high living but also as venues for world-class entertaining.

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Customer Reviews

"Since receiving the book, I have barely put it down. Have you seen me? I'm the girl carrying the book like it's my new favorite toy. Yeah that was me. Whether you are a

designer, a design historian or a design lover I highly recommend, Paul R. Williams: Classic Hollywood Style. It is a rich celebration of an important architect who shaped Hollywood sense of style and the joy his homes continue to bring." ~Design Wonderland

Karen E. Hudson is Paul Williams's granddaughter, an owner of one of his homes, and the author of Paul R. Williams Architect. A third-generation Angeleno, she chronicles the African-American experience in Los Angeles in writings and photographs.

The pictures are wonderful and the stories behind the houses as well. Very inspiring. It is a shame this Architect is not recognized in the architectural world as much as others in the field. This man was ahead of his time and a genius who fought through such discrimination in a field that is still mostly white and male. This history should be shared in colleges and universities around the country.

A slightly flawed, but still glorious book. As another reviewer mentioned, floor plans of these wonderful homes would have been a nice addition, and there are puzzling disconnects between some of the narrative and the images that accompany it. And bedrooms, for some reason, seem largely overlooked. But overall, I was thrilled with the opportunity to see inside, around and into the architectural heart of these strikingly beautiful homes. A definite 5-star recommend.

lovely pictorial & I like that the homes have dates & names. it helps to follow his design timeline

This is the third in a series of presentations on the work of African American architect Paul Revere Williams all done by his grand daughter Karen Hudson. They are all worthy of note with this one being very notable for the fine photography and meticulous presentation of details of William's work. Mr. Williams is perhaps the most distinguished of the few African American architects extant or passed especially his rich contributions to Los Angeles area residential design. His work is elegant and clear. I would commend this book to anyone who is interested in residential architecture; especially the period from 1920 through the 1950's and to anyone interested in becoming familiar with the outstanding contributions of African American's to this country's rich history of pioneers in design arts.

Very interesting book on a classic Hollywood architect, especially given the context that he was

working in and the hurdles that he had to overcome with great success.

Paul R. Williams was an outstanding architect. The memories are all included in this book.

If one is interested in Hollywood history, this book provides an informative background of a somewhat unknown legend in L.A.'s architectural legacies and homes not normally open to the public.

This compilation of selected work of the late, brilliant Los Angeles architect Paul R. Williams is thoughtfully authored by his granddaughter and, as a result, we are given a rare, personal view of the Man Behind the Houses. Twenty-two of the architect's residential projects are presented in photographs and text. Each is an example of Williams' tremendous skill and incredible grasp of architectural style, while never losing sight of the all-important element of appropriateness. Williams' great talent to make even very large homes approachable, livable, and unpretentious is apparent in the selected houses. The reader is treated to a quote from the architect's own writings or interviews at the beginning of the text accompanying each of the houses presented. These gems describe his philosophy of architecture and the design process, or give hint to the barriers to be overcome by a black man working in the architectural profession in the early twentieth century. A portrait of Williams emerges as one who chose to overcome race-related obstacles in the same positive, forthright manner in which he tackled design challenges - apparently with equal success. A fascinating example is his self-taught ability to sketch upside down, so that he and his clients could be on opposite sides of the desk during planning meetings, thus preserving their respective personal space. There are two significant shortcomings with the production of this book however. The most glaring is the absence of floor plans - not a single one! To present an architect's work, especially one as gifted as Williams, without any spatial reference is unforgivable. Secondly, the photography, while technically excellent, fails to really capture the depth, or layers, of the architecture. There are many living and dining rooms, foyers, dens, and kitchens. There are adequate exterior views, although I would have been more satisfied seeing several facades that were conspicuously absent. But few details are shared - what about the "oval breakfast room" or the "wonderful little octagonal powder room" mentioned? Or the hidden closets? Bedrooms? Unique design elements? It's these sorts of details that express the soul of a house and, disappointingly, we weren't given access. In the end, what could have been a five-star book, isn't.

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