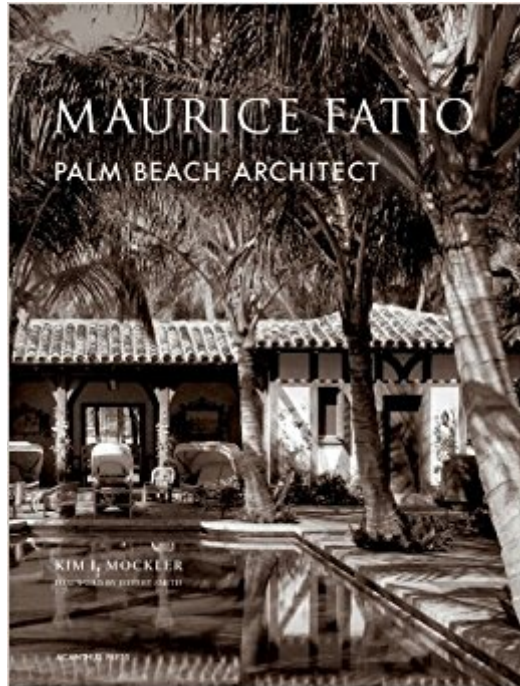


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Maurice Fatio: Palm Beach Architect (The American Architect)



Synopsis

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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Customer Reviews

If you have ever lived or been to South Florida, then it would be hard not to have heard of the great architect, Addison Mizner. Whole streets and shopping centers are named after him. During Mizner's heyday there was one other great architect who has been grossly overlooked; his name was Maurice Fatio. Finally, a book has been written to rectify this imbalance and what a book it is! The first thing I noticed with this book is its heft - substantial and made of quality materials. No skimping was done to diminish the book's beauty. Upon opening the book and paging through its contents, one can immediately see that this is a visually stunning work. The book is filled with original black & white and contemporary color photographs, many taken by the author himself. I was thrilled to see that in each chapter all 26 houses included detailed floorplans. Each chapter contains a brief biography of the original and sometimes current owners, coupled with little tidbits of engrossing facts. The author then describes the house itself, creating with delightfully stylistic prose a vivid portrait of the interiors and exteriors of Maurice Fatio's designs of pure genius. At the back of the book is a complete list of all the Florida homes and buildings that Fatio designed in his brief career (sadly he died at 49). I was stunned to see the author also added who commissioned the house, whether additions have since been made, but most interestingly, whether or not the structure has been demolished. Not every book of this kind offers such detail. The author, Kim I. Mockler, has created a monumental work on the designs of Maurice Fatio, which I predict will be used by both professional architects and the fascinated layman for years to come.

As always, the quality of books published by Acanthus Press are without a doubt the best. As a collector of architectural monographs this book is a very important addition to my library. The quality of the book is exceptional and that includes the work of the author. I am pleased beyond words to have this book in my home.

Another delicious, gorgeously illustrated book full of floor plans and stories from Acanthus. Kim Mockler has done an honorable job telling the tale of this hugely important architect who seems to have been cast in Addison Mizner's larger-than-life shadow. But surely Fatio's houses in Palm Beach are every bit as complex and interesting as Mizner's.

An excellent book. A report on the most beautiful historic homes built in an era that no longer exists. A glamorous and innocent lifestyle in a town where people went to spend the holidays. Historical black and white photos and all projects have complete floor plans. I highly recommend.

We purchased this book after having visited Palm Beach where we enjoyed seeing many of Maurice Fatio's lovely homes. We did not see the interiors. The photography is outstanding with double page color photos. It is interesting also to see many of the floor plans and photos of the interiors, which Fatio often designed. The history and photos of the family, originally from Switzerland, adds to the enjoyment of the book. Mr. Mockler has done outstanding research and his admiration of Maurice Fatio is evident.

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