



MEET THE ARCHITECT

Mark P. Finlay *by Alexa Stevenson*

A CONTEXTUALIST ARCHITECT BLENDS TRADITION WITH CONTEMPORARY INSIGHT



The Designer | The range of Mark Finlay's (BELOW LEFT) projects includes residential, commercial, corporate and historic renovation. **Al Fresco** | He designed this outdoor dining gazebo (LEFT) and private residence in Kiawah Island, South Carolina. **On the Edge** | A new single-style home (BELOW RIGHT) is sited at the mouth of Southport Harbor. **Clearing Up** | A glass shower with ocean views (BOTTOM) is the decadent focal point of this master bathroom. See *Reviews*.



What's your design philosophy? I am a contextualist. I start with a clean sheet of paper and listen to what my client really wants and the design then evolves from a single idea. When you're able to carry out that idea as a pure thought through the end of construction, that's when you end up with a great building. **Where did you receive training?** I received an engineering degree from Wentworth University in Boston and a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Kentucky. I started working when I was 15 years old in New Canaan—first for Ray Kelley, then for Gary Lindstrom. When I graduated from college I had 10 years of experience and then got my dream job working for Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo & Associates, formerly Eero Saarinen's firm. **What do you think is the biggest challenge in architecture today?** The execution of the design idea. This is where you separate the men from the boys in our profession. **What is a common mistake you see inexperienced architects making?** Lack of restraint. **Many of your projects are golf clubs. What do you have to keep in mind when designing clubhouses?** When I am commissioned to design a golf club, essentially what I'm doing is creating a home away from home. These buildings are often like large houses adapted to dovetail with and enhance the golf experience. It is essential to understand the social aspects of golf in the design of any great clubhouse. **What's the most comfortable living space you've ever been in?** The living room at Skibo Castle in Scotland. It's a beautifully proportioned room with unbelievable views, lots of light and an incredible feel. **Name a source of inspiration:** Edwin Lutyens, Frank Lloyd Wright, McKim, Mead & White and, in general, American architecture built between 1860 and 1925. **What's your guilty design pleasure?** Contemporary elements within a traditionally rooted composition. I love to introduce an element of surprise when it reflects the client's personality.

I always cringe when I see: Clichéd architectural elements used out of context to articulate a volume with no reference to function or style. **Describe your clients:** Sophisticated, daring and educated architectural connoisseurs with great senses of humor. 🍷



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