



WADE WEISSMANN

CASTING VISION ONTO A BLANK SLATE

| BY HELÈNE RAMACKERS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID BADER AND DAVID ABBOTT

Making his clients feel alive in a newly designed space has put Wade Weissmann firmly on the map in the architecture business. Creating dream homes since 1996 his collaborative approach to design always yields the best results.

WADE, WHEN AND HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY AS AN ARCHITECT BEGIN?

I knew from about the age of 6 that I wanted to be an architect. My grandfather wanted to be an architect, so he bought me architecture books for every birthday and holiday. After receiving my masters in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania, I got my feet wet working in a few different architecture firms, spending time on construction sites with woodworkers and masons, working alongside my cousin and best friend, the late interior

designer, Jon Schlagenhaft, and doing anything and everything I could to learn as much about the design world as possible.

A few years into that period of my life, my brother engaged me in the design of his cabin in Northern Wisconsin. The next-door neighbors then hired me to design a home for them. That was the beginning of it all.

WHAT/WHO DO YOU DRAW YOUR INSPIRATION FROM?

Travel brings me the most inspiration- visiting new places, amazing cities and towns, hotels, restaurants, gardens. I am always soaking in inspiration wherever I am.

WHAT ARE / HAVE BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?

Truly the most significant challenge when running a firm is carving out the time to allow for creativity and drawing. Once I find the time, the ideas flow from my pencil. I have learned to adapt and draw all the time - in restaurants, airplanes, or wherever I am!

WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO WORK ON A SPECIFIC PROJECT?

A client who is looking to do something unique. I honestly do not have a requirement about the size of a project or the budget, so long as the client is excited by design and creativity.

WHAT DOES YOUR CREATIVE / WORK PROCESS INVOLVE?

We have a collaborative process. We love integrating ideas from our clients, builders, interior







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architects, landscape designers, and all design contributors. We start the process by getting to know our clients and the way they live. It's an incredibly personal process, so it is very important to me that we have trust, and I know how they want it to "feel" when they get up in the morning, or when they are moving from room to room.

We like to find out what they liked and didn't like about their previous living space and about what ultimately would allow them to feel most "alive" in this new space. A lot of clients will put together photo boards (on websites like Pinterest or Houzz) of spaces that speak to them in some way. Other clients enjoy having me simply sit with them and sketch as they share with me their dreams for their home. It all depends on the client.

We also like to draw by hand in the early phases of design. We sketch initial site and floorplan ideas, hand-drawn perspectives for the exteriors as well as interior perspectives, including selected furniture, lighting, rugs, etc. that bring life and scale to the design.

THE FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

The absolute most rewarding part of my job is seeing our clients enjoy their homes - from attending parties there to seeing their holiday celebrations in pictures and even getting texts through the pandemic from clients saying how grateful they are for their well-planned sanctuaries while they spend extra hours there.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SETS YOUR DESIGNS APART?

We aim to strike a balance between considering lifestyle 'must-haves' with designs that are pleasing with balance, symmetry, and scale. We pride ourselves on really thorough drawing sets, so there are very few surprises during construction. We think about how every building finish and trim interact so that it is intentional and resolved.

HOW DO YOU EXCEED YOUR CLIENTS' EXPECTATIONS?

I believe we are stewards of our client's wishes. At the end of the day, after we are gone, it is their home. I am not interested in developing a 'signature style,' and I do not believe in prioritizing the architect's ego over the client's wishes. We listen to our clients and then use our professional expertise to stay one step ahead of the process and make it as smooth and fun for them as possible. I feel that is why we have many clients that like to build multiple projects with us!

WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ARCHITECT?

It is the ability to get people excited by casting vision onto a blank slate!

TALK US THROUGH YOUR LATEST PROJECTS.

We are so fortunate to have a number of exciting projects on the boards and under construction right now. The majority are residential, with the exception of an exciting mixed-use hospitality development we planned for Nashville. We have new homes, family compounds and renovations on the East and West coasts, in the South (Florida, Carolinas, Tennessee) and many around our central office in Milwaukee. We are building homes for Milwaukee and Chicago clients in urban Milwaukee neighborhoods, as well as





several lake and weekend get-away homes on the water and in the rustic Northwoods of Wisconsin.

YOU PUBLISHED A BOOK IN 2018, 'HEIR-LOOM HOUSES: THE ARCHITECTURE OF WADE WEISSMANN.' WHO SHOULD ADD THIS TO THEIR COLLECTION?

An architecture enthusiast or someone looking for inspiration for their new home or renovation project. We hope that our projects in the book help to inspire others to think of unique design solutions.

DESCRIBE YOUR DESIGNS IN THREE WORDS.

Timeless, Lasting and Custom

WHAT EXCITING PROJECTS ARE IN THE PIPELINE?

Currently, my brother and I are developing a luxury music hotel and community on a 20-acre hilltop in the heart of Nashville. I am serving as both a developer and a designer on that project. I have always wanted to extend what we know and do very well on residential projects to special hospitality projects and shaping neighborhoods and towns.

<http://wadeweissmannarchitecture.com/>