

## WRIGHT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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The story may be Pennsylvania folklore but the heroine is typical of Wright devotees. Keystoneers don't share the quibbling ambivalence of Wright's fellow Wisconsinites. Pennsylvanians smile broadly and tell you that Fallingwater, the home built on a waterfall at Bear Run, is the most photographed house in America. I'd have guessed the White House but who's arguing? I've long been one of the smitten.

Frank Lloyd Wright's name is heard often but mere repetition can jade reputation with a false sense of familiarity. Most of the public knows Wright as the famous prairie architect, but some have never looked at the sum of what he did. Many admirers from Illinois have looked only in the Chicago area or downstate. They're not acquainted with his enormous range of creativity and power of design.

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Materials and textures were always native to the locale. Living space was designed for the individual site and he often designed everything inside the space-- from windows, furniture and lamps right down to the dishes.

There are two collections of Wright's work which have been touring nationally under the banner: Ideas and Treasures. The piece de resistance is the Usonian Automatic House, a full-scale, twenty-first century concept never before constructed except in this movable version. The plans for it are now offered. You can walk through the three-bedroom, two-bath house with its rearrangeable future, try it on and see how it fits your lifestyle. In an age of built-in obsolescence, inherent flexibility is still Wright's hallmark. Obviously, only large, big city museums can accommodate the exhibit but it's worth traveling to see.

The collection also includes a grouping of authentic treasures from the Dana-Thomas House in Springfield, Illinois. For many visitors, the double pedestal lamp, the art glass and the furniture are the high points. Included are fine examples of Wright's development of the simple geometrics of prairie sumac into sophisticated designs that have an Oriental feeling. They will look as modern in the next hundred years as they do now.

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as poetry. They reflect a master craftsman's hand and vision in a way photographs or even the three dimensional scale models can't do. But the models do make interesting viewing, also. Many of those shown were never built. Wright designed over a thousand structures, some fifty per cent of which were never built. Most people don't know they're all currently available through Taliesin Associated Architects, and prices are competitive.

My favorite rendering is still the Mile High building. Five times taller than Sears Tower, it was designed to accommodate 15,000 cars and 100 helicopters. Since the Sears Tower created its own wind and weather surprises, I wonder what a massive vertical mile in the sky would do. There's an unpleasant three-foot sway in the Tower, and that sidewise motion would increase with additional height. But engineers agree the structure is possible. The concept is exciting, the drawing magnificent.

Whatever else people said about Wright, no one called him mediocre. The sheer volume of his output (21,000 original drawings alone) is staggering even in our day of computers, copiers and FAX machines. One of his own particularly revealing remarks was about his music: "I don't play the piano, my piano plays me," he said. Wright, jauntily wearing a pork pie hat and sometimes a cape, never permitted himself to be called Frank L. or even F. Lloyd Wright. He insisted

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Maybe we can't have that sort of genius without arrogance. Maybe arrogance is what pushes those clean soaring forms into space. Maybe hubris is all that holds up those tons of outthrust concrete.

All I know is, he put his unique elan into everything he created-- from a chair to the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo which withstood a couple of killer earthquakes before being moved to Inuyama for a museum. I'm willing to grant that Wright was not ordinary.

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in too long, giving us a taste of freedom and spaciousness, subduing the limitations of walls and introducing us to light. It was stubbornness that kept him in Wisconsin despite his neighbors' unwelcome, the whisper campaigns, the snubs and sneers. His flight to Arizona had more to do with his health than with yielding to social pressure. But I'm glad he went. The desert drew out of him some of his most spectacular work. Between Wright and Georgia O'Keeffe, the Southwest met its match.

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Holloway  
1st Place

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For me, the best part of the exhibit is the "ideas" section. Wright's original colored drawings are as eloquent as poetry. They reflect a master craftsman's hand and vision in a way photographs or even the third dimension of scale models can't do. But the models do make interesting viewing, also. Many of those shown were never built. Wright designed over a thousand structures, some fifty per cent of which were never built. Most people don't know they're all currently available through the Taliesin Associated Architects, and prices are competitive.

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It was his innate defiance that destroyed the box we all lived in too long, giving us a taste of freedom and spaciousness, subduing the limitations of walls and introducing us to light. It was stubbornness that kept him in Wisconsin despite his neighbors' unwelcome, the whisper campaigns, the snubs and sneers. His flight to Arizona had more to do with his health than with yielding to social pressure. But I'm glad he went. The desert drew out of him some of his most spectacular work. Between Wright and Georgia O'Keeffe, the Southwest met its match.

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