

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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All New! People & Places

A photograph of Gerard Butler sitting in a red armchair with a gold and yellow patterned fabric. He is wearing a white button-down shirt and blue jeans, smiling at the camera. The background is dark and ornate.

Gerard Butler

His New York Loft

PLUS: Sting in London
Lance Armstrong in Texas

JUST
FREE



Marco Aldaco

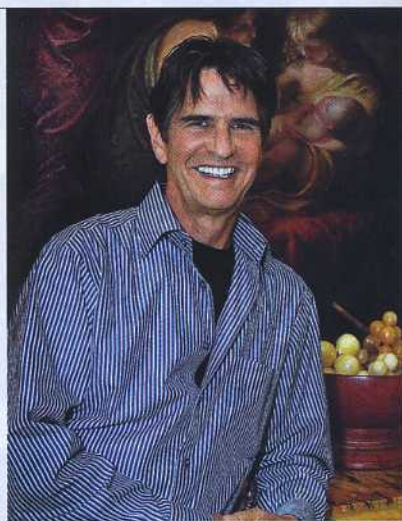
Marco Aldaco's portfolio is defined by an affinity for natural, indigenous materials ("I do not believe in the artificial," he remarks). A particular sensitivity "to the region where I work," Aldaco notes, be it his native Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela or, more recently, the Bahamas, also figures heavily in his work. The architect's structures, which blur the line between interior and exterior, embrace their sites because of the intense consideration he gives what he calls "the geographical elements—climate, light of the sun, winds and earthquakes—to take advantage of them and also defend myself against them." That's not to say he doesn't incorporate traditions from elsewhere—he describes himself as an "interpreter of cultures"—though the result is one in which his singular vision brings together a host of disparate elements. Of his houses, he observes, "I do not do capricious, absurd compositions of short life."

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Thomas Allardyce

Thomas Allardyce's approach to his profession has changed significantly over the years in one key respect: Although he still works out a furniture plan for every one of his projects, it's only a plan. "Starting out, I would follow the arrangement as shown on the plan. I have since used it as only a guide for the purchasing of furniture," he says. "There is no substitute for the artful arrangement on-site. The angle of a chair or the placement of a table will create the sensuous flavor that makes a home. I never hesitate to let my eyes and instincts guide me." One thing that hasn't changed over the years is the designer's love of travel—an ongoing source of inspiration for a man who effortlessly mixes periods and styles into an elegant whole. "New discoveries in architectural details, furnishings and color combinations are all part of the treasure hunt that richly enhances the work I love and continually keeps it fresh," he says.

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Charles Allem

I can be inspired by nature, art, period architecture," says Miami-based interior designer Charles Allem. "However, it's most exciting when inspiration comes from something completely unexpected, like the caviar at a cocktail party that led me to design the ceiling of a hotel in Hong Kong. I used dozens of lighted-metal spheres in differing sizes, resulting in my 'caviar ceiling.'" Translating an hors d'oeuvre into a dramatic detail takes the kind of audacity the South African-born designer is known for. He likes to play with scale and luxury, working in a range of styles—modern, Art Déco, minimalist, Louis XIV. "Every project, regardless of size or budget, can present an interesting design opportunity," he says. "It all depends on whether there is a compelling possibility of creating something transcendental." He's now designing a furniture line and a carpet collection, which will debut in 2010.

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