

## WRIGHT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The expensively dressed woman, aiming her Leica at Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural triumph known as Fallingwater, slipped off her rocky perch and broke her leg. People who rushed to her aid were told: "Please get my camera first, I don't want to lose that picture!"

The story may be Pennsylvania folklore but the heroine is typical of Wright devotees. Keystoners 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.

It didn't stop with exterior surfaces or structural innovation. His vision was total-- beginning with the land.



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.

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 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



on an equally accented three syllables. His intimates called him Mr. Wright. There are still two dozen of those intimates working in the Taliesin fellowship.

Wright's detractors point to the frequent leaks in his flat roof designs, the problems of his cantilever rods directing rain indoors, and the inability of his original Taliesin house to withstand the rigors of Wisconsin winter. And they cluck about his moral shortcomings, ticking off wife and child desertion, assorted mistresses and scandals. Mostly they can't forgive his effrontery when he said publicly that he was "above the rules of ordinary men." There's little doubt that he believed that. But however insufferable he was in person, such things have been tolerated in lesser individuals whose contributions pale by comparison.

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.

It was his 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.

They met each other, those two iconoclasts of an era. They hit it off. Some of their correspondence is stored in Taliesin West's archives at Scottsdale.

Several of the permanent Wright exhibits in Wisconsin and Arizona feature enormous, beautifully-lit color photographs-- among them one of the best views I've ever seen of Fallingwater, built in 1937. I can almost picture him standing there, cape flapping, confronting the grumbling construction crew who feared the strange design and refused to remove the scaffolding and supports from the concrete.

Witnesses say Wright strode over to a worker, grabbed his axe, chopped away the supports himself and Fallingwater stood. To me, this is the stuff of legends.



Holloway  
1st Place

## WRIGHT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The expensively dressed woman aiming her Leica at Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural triumph known as Fallingwater in Pennsylvania, slipped off her rocky perch and broke her leg. Those who rushed to her aid were told: "Please get my camera first; I don't want to lose that picture!"

The story may be Pennsylvania folklore but the heroine is typical of Wright devotees. Keystoners 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, 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 people know he was 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.

It didn't stop with exterior surfaces or structural innovation. His vision was total--beginning with the land. Materials and textures were native to the locale. Living space was designed for the individual site and he often designed everything inside the space-- from furniture, windows 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.

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.

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. He insisted on an equally accented three syllables. His intimates called him Mr. Wright. There are still two dozen of those intimates working in the Taliesin fellowship.

Wright's detractors point to the frequent leaks in his flat roof designs, the way the cantilever rods direct rain inside, and the inability of his original Taliesin house to withstand the rigors of Wisconsin winter. And they cluck about his moral shortcomings, ticking off wife and child desertion, assorted mistresses and scandals. Mostly they can't forgive his effrontery when he said publicly that he was above the rules of ordinary men. There's little doubt that he believed that. But however insufferable he was in person, such things have been tolerated in lesser individuals whose contributions pale by comparison.

Maybe we can't have that sort of genius without arrogance. Maybe arrogance is what pushes those clean soaring forms into space. Maybe arrogance 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.

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.

They met each other, those two iconoclasts of an era. They hit it off. Some of their correspondence is stored in Taliesin West's archives at Scottsdale.

Several of the permanent Wright exhibits in Wisconsin and Arizona feature enormous, beautifully-lit color photographs-- among them one of the best views I've ever seen of Fallingwater, built in 1937. I can almost picture him standing there, confronting the grumbling construction crew who feared the strange design and refused to remove the scaffolding and supports from the concrete. Witnesses say Wright strode over to a worker, grabbed his axe, chopped away the supports himself and Fallingwater stood. To me, this is the stuff of legends.



## RIGHT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The expensively dressed woman, aiming her Leica at Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural triumph known as Fallingwater, slipped off her rocky perch and broke her leg. People who rushed to her aid were told: "Please get my camera first, I don't want to lose that picture!"

The story sounds like Pennsylvania folklore but the heroine is typical of the Wright devotees I've known. Besides, 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 a subject 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 total 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.

It didn't stop with exterior surfaces or structural innovation. His vision was complete-- beginning with the land. 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.

Two collections of Wright's work have toured 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. Wright is still right. There's no hint of decadence, no indication that tomorrow's avant garde will leave his work behind, and no decline in his popularity among architecture buffs and serious students.

To me, 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 his three dimensional scale models can't do. However, the models do make interesting viewing. Many of those on exhibit have never been 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, wearing a jaunty pork pie hat and sometimes a cape, never permitted himself to be called Frank L. or even F. Lloyd Wright. He insisted on an equally accented three syllables. His intimates called him Mr. Wright. There are still two dozen of those intimates working in the Taliesin fellowship.

Wright's detractors point to the frequent leaks in his flat roof designs, the problems of his cantilever rods directing rain indoors, and the inability of his original Taliesin house to withstand the rigors of Wisconsin winter. And they cluck about his moral shortcomings, ticking off wife and child desertion, assorted



mistresses and scandals --which are indefensible, no doubt about it. Mostly they can't forgive his effrontery when he said publicly that he was "above the rules of ordinary men." There's also little doubt that he believed that. But however insufferable he was in person, such things have been tolerated in lesser individuals whose contributions pale by comparison.

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 to be reopened as a museum. I'm willing to grant that Wright was not ordinary.

It was his 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.

They also met each other, those two iconoclasts of an era. They hit it off. Some of their correspondence is stored in Taliesin West's archives at Scottsdale.

Several of the permanent Wright exhibits in Wisconsin and Arizona



feature enormous, beautifully-lit color photographs-- among them one of the best views I've ever seen of Fallingwater, built in 1937. I can almost picture him standing there, cape flapping, confronting the grumbling construction crew who feared the strange design and refused to remove the scaffolding and supports from the concrete.

Witnesses say Wright strode over to a worker, grabbed his axe, chopped away the supports himself and Fallingwater stood. To me, this is the stuff of legends.