



NEWSPAPER

ARCHITECTURE HOTSHEET 2

UPSTATE OF MIND

At Lake George, the Inverted Guest Houses structure features a garage/storage area, with folding, copper-clad doors, and two suites

Gluck of the draw

When choosing the architects for your upstate New York retreat, know that Gluck & Partners will leave nothing to chance

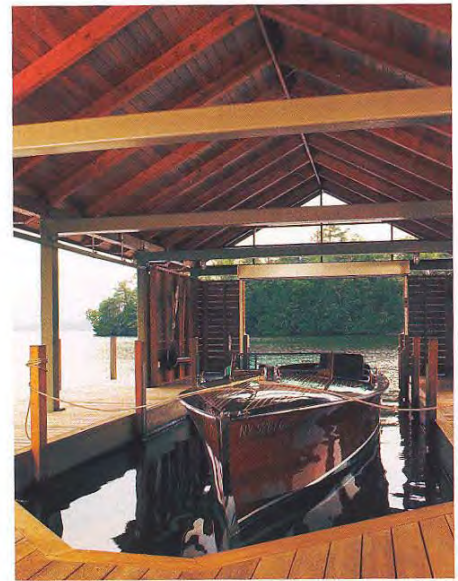






A 32-mile sliver of water in upstate New York, Lake George's shores are scattered with holiday homes and summer retreats. It's also a hot spot for America's ongoing battle of domestic architectural styles, as over-scaled neo-vernacular duked it out with sleek modernism along the prime waterfront sites. One architect in particular, Peter L Gluck, makes a sound case for progressive modernism. His practice, Gluck & Partners, has been quietly producing high-quality residential design since it was founded in 1972. Rather than slavishly follow fashion, Gluck, now 66, has stuck to his modernist guns, developing and honing the skills he learnt while a student at Yale in the late 1960s under the tutelage of Paul Rudolph.

Gluck & Partners has since built up a respectable body of work, and now consists of 40 architects working on everything from affordable housing in Aspen to a low-income health centre in New York and sprawling family 'compounds' in the rolling hills of New York state's more prestigious districts. The firm's Inverted Guest Houses, completed in 2005, is one of eight structures in a large family retreat at Lake George. The project consists of a garage and storage complex flanked by two two-storey guest suites that serve the main dwelling, a 1920s house. The bedrooms are all at ground level and the lower apartments have a glazed living area with views of the surrounding woodland, while the upper living area looks out across the whole property. The garage, with parking for six cars, has folding, hangar-style doors clad in finely corrugated copper to create a shimmering, shifting >>



LAKESIDE STORY

Top, a suite at the Inverted Guest Houses, so named as one suite is an inverted version of the other

Above, even the boat is well housed on Lake George

Left, the garage is designed to accommodate up to six vehicles



WORK THE LINE
Top, the Bar House in its western US valley site. The linear design means all rooms face south, for maximum sunlight. On the north side, stairs lead to a roof terrace
Above, the glazed living area

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INSPIRATION

Gluck is not at all keen on neo-vernacular, but he remains optimistic that 'modernism is everywhere', citing in particular the work of Herzog + de Meuron as inspirations: 'They skipped over the horrible postmodern period.'

UPCOMING

A slice of affordable housing in Aspen, Colorado, a new school in east Harlem and a 14-storey tower in New York. There is also a monograph, *Modern Impulse*, coming soon, to be published by Oro Editions.

quality. Inside, more copper and the bold, yellow-painted steel structure make hi-tech statements.

For Gluck, these residential compounds are town planning in miniature. 'American houses are getting so big that the traditional plan is just crazy,' he says. 'They've become these grotesque McMansions that ruin the landscape.' Gluck reasons that he's 'trying to break buildings down to human scale', rather than overwhelm sites with vast structures. Earlier projects – such as Bridge House in New York state and Split House in New Canaan, Connecticut – illustrate the way the practice breaks up large-floor areas into individual architectural elements. The latter house comprises a box and a cylinder, with one area for children and one for parents. All services and connections are buried to minimise the impact on the wooded site.

Bar House, completed in 2004, is on a two-acre site in the western US. Nestling in a deep valley, the site gets sunlight only from the south, so the house is set at right angles to the steep hills to maximise natural light. Five bedrooms and an open-plan family room are arranged along one long corridor with south-facing views, while on the north side of the house a shallow staircase leads to a spectacular roof deck.

Crucially, Gluck & Partners is not just involved in design but also in construction. 'We build each project as construction managers, sub-contracting all the trades,' says Gluck. He believes that this approach gets things done on time and on budget. 'It's the only way. Otherwise architects are always sitting around crying about how contractors have ruined this and that.'

Gluck & Partners represents the quiet continuation of a modernist tradition that's sometimes lost beneath contemporary architecture's ongoing cult of personality. Occasionally the firm has found itself at odds with the status quo. A little known work was the refurbishment and extension of a 1955 Mies van der Rohe house in Connecticut. Rather than imitate what was there, Gluck brought his own take on modernism to the structure, but fell foul of an over-protective attitude to the German legend. 'There's a Mies cabal: they didn't like anyone doing anything,' he recalls. These days, plenty of satisfied customers are happy that Gluck & Partners practises what it preaches. ✱