

THE GUIDE TO LUXURY LIFESTYLES IN THE TRISTATE AREA

# NEW YORK LIVING MAGAZINE

## Top Architects

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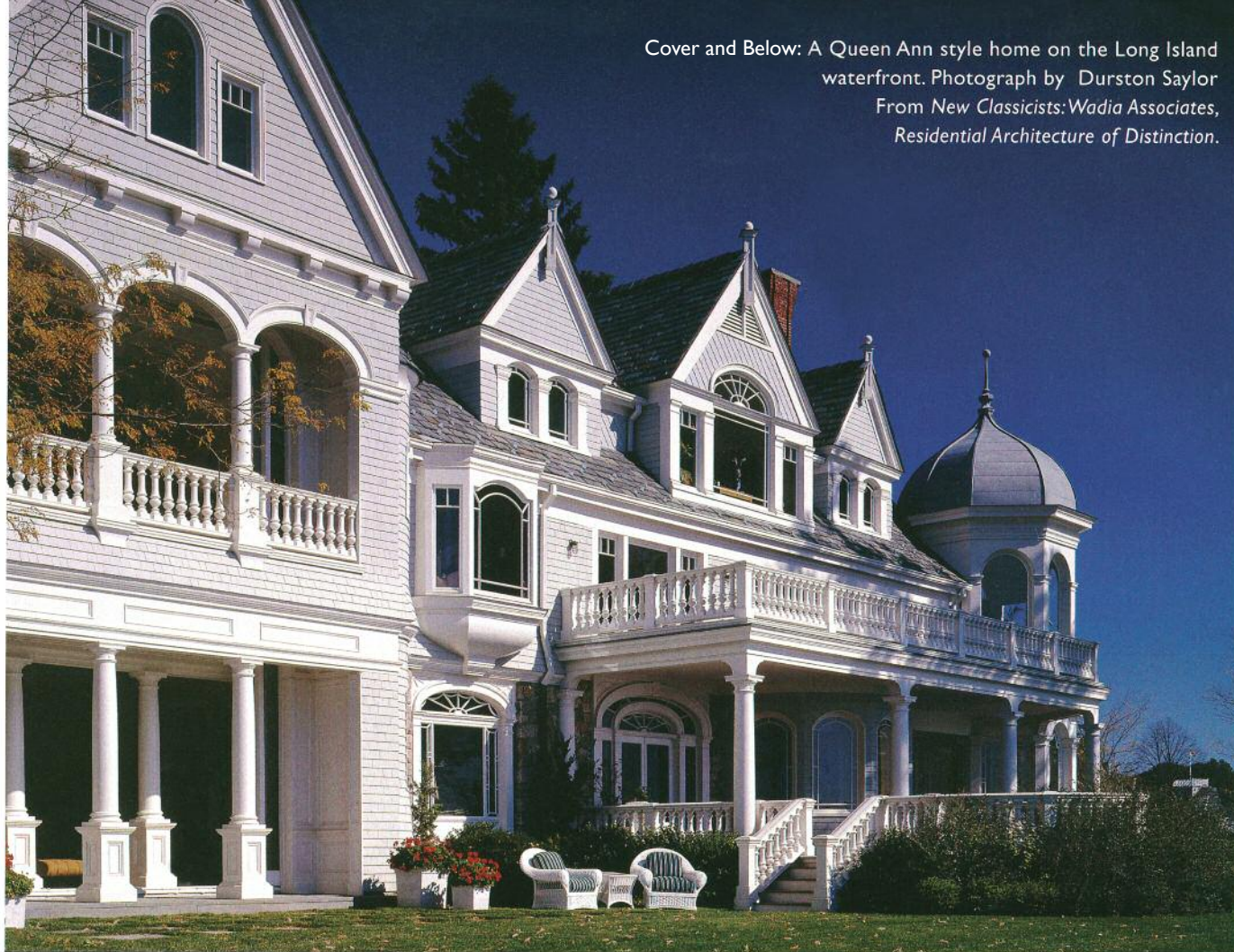
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## HISTORIC HOMES



Cover and Below: A Queen Ann style home on the Long Island waterfront. Photograph by Durston Saylor  
From *New Classicists: Wadia Associates, Residential Architecture of Distinction*.



## Restore Old Homes With Care, Advises Connecticut Architect

Restoring an old home to its former splendor, or building a seamless addition, can sometimes stump even the smartest do-it-yourselfer. That's when Dinyar Wadia dashes to the rescue. The self-described "chief cook and bottle washer" of Wadia Associates, a New Caanan, Connecticut-based architectural firm, Wadia says he has plenty of opportunity to work with many different architectural styles, and has learned how to make the most of any of them.

"In this part of the country the architecture is eclectic, not vernacular as it is in many regions," he says. "When I build an addition to an old home, I want to make it look old, too—not by beating the wood with a chain, but by using proper design, moldings, columns, proportions, floor heights, balconies, and railings, so that it will look like it was built in, say, the early 1800s and perfectly maintained. We use discreet lighting, discreet thermostats, so you don't see a bank of electrical switches when you enter a room. We're careful with the floor registers, and above all we pay attention to making the siding blend in. If people don't say how ugly or how beautiful the new addition is, you've done it right."

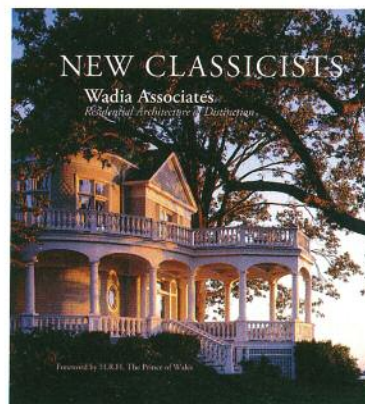
"When you're restoring an old house, you'd be silly not to replace the brass plumbing lines from the 1930s; they're bound to wear out soon anyway. A very old house might need a new roof, new windows and doors. Many old houses

have horrible aluminum insect screens that detract from the look of the house. We can provide built-in retractable insect screens that will give a look of authenticity. Some wood shingle roofs are moth-eaten, need to be replaced. Many wooden shingles you buy at hardware stores are garbage, but we use a heavier wood that looks substantial. For slate roofs, we use a blend of slate to create a mottled effect like the old ones had."

Wadia also recommends growing plants on houses wherever feasible, for a more old-fashioned look.

"In America there has developed a belief that vines will damage a house, but that's not so," he insists. "Ordinary ivy, Virginia creeper, climbing hydrangea, and other such plants will not do any damage. Just trim them two or three times a year."

Images Publishing Group has just published a book, entitled *New Classicists: Wadia Associates, Residential Architecture of Distinction*, which presents the wide array of designs and details that distinguishes Wadia homes.





Rosemary Hall, Greenwich CT: An addition by Wadia incorporates new details that echo the style of the original home.  
Photograph by Jonathan Wallen.  
From *New Classicists*: Wadia Associates, Residential Architecture of Distinction.

