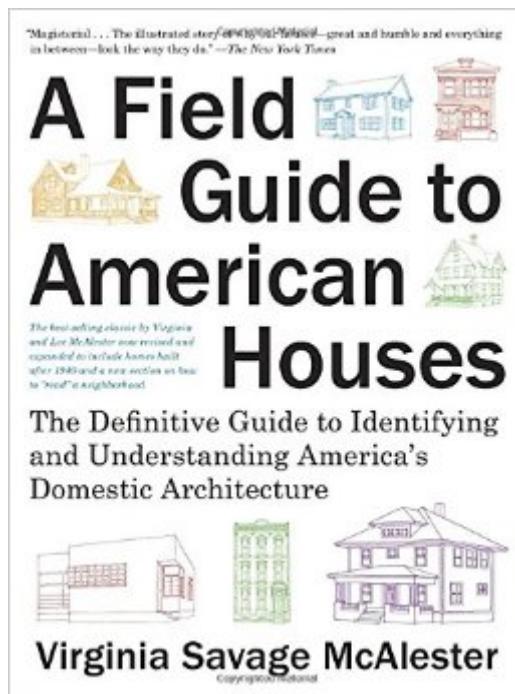


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# A Field Guide To American Houses (Revised): The Definitive Guide To Identifying And Understanding America's Domestic Architecture



## Synopsis

Now in paperback: the fully expanded, updated, and freshly designed second edition of the most comprehensive and widely acclaimed guide to domestic architecture: in print since its original publication in 1984, and acknowledged everywhere as the unmatched, essential guide to American houses. This revised edition includes a section on neighborhoods; expanded and completely new categories of house styles with photos and descriptions of each; an appendix on "Approaches to Construction in the 20th and 21st Centuries"; an expanded bibliography; and 600 new photographs and line drawings.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (237 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

If you are an old-house fan, this book is the equivalent of a college education. Here are some reasons this book is both entertaining and useful: It starts with chapters on basic structure: shapes of houses, style of construction, ornamentation, etc. There are simple, remarkably clear drawings accompanying all this that will serve to give you a kind of 'vocabulary' to interpret houses when you run across something new (for example, a dozen different types of dormers - what are they all called?). (These involve almost entirely external elements, for detailed interiors you will need another book.) Lots of delicious historical background about how history and technological advances changed housing. For example, the authors divide folk housing into "pre" and "post-railroad" because not until railroads made building materials nationally accessible did a national set of housing styles develop. Following this, there are a series of chapters describing different styles (i.e., Victorian, Tudor, etc.), starting with the characteristic details, when and where the style is found, etc.

The McAlisters do a particularly good job on regional variations; there are some remarkable maps showing the prevalence of different styles in different states. The graphics are fantastic and plentiful. The simple stylized drawings of building elements (rooflines, doorways, windows, etc.) clearly distinguish one detail from another, while the photographs make you want to pop into the car and drive all over to see the real houses themselves. One note: there is a table, starting around p. 55, that will make the book much easier to use as a 'field guide' (i.e., driving around looking at houses the way birders look at birds).

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