THE NEW OLD HOUSE

historic & modern architecture combined

MARC KRISTAL

foreword by GIL SCHAFER III

FOREWORD

gil schafer III

SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS occur when there are opposing points of view—as long as they are undertaken with intelligence and civility. So it is with buildings, too, and that "conversation" is at the heart of what intrigues Marc Kristal in this book. Roaming both sides of the Atlantic, he has sought out—and now shares with us—a delightfully diverse collection of examples of the intriguing dialogue that can happen between history and modernity, when the two are brought together in a skillful architectural intervention.

It shouldn't surprise you that a writer would be interested in stories, and Marc is no exception. As I learned when we worked together on my own book, Marc has a particular gift for "reading" buildings and uncovering what it is they are trying to say. As well, he knows how to articulate beautifully the stories one can find within a structure: to put you in the place where it is, and to help you understand the forces that shaped it. Such stories are the cornerstone of his strategy in selecting the eighteen uniquely compelling houses for this book. In each, the architect and the client (sometimes one and the same) made powerful connections to the original character of a house, which they retained and celebrated while bringing the structure into the present. And the variety of geographical locations, historical contexts, and architectural solutions makes for a wonderful read.

As an architect working within a historical design context for nearly thirty years, I am always intrigued by the possibilities an old building offers for contemporary life—and have remained enthusiastic about architectural interventions rendered in a modern mode, when they're executed inventively *and* elegantly and when they demonstrate a clear understanding of the essence of the historic original. Marc's fascination with a house's narrative is well matched to my own, and we share a belief that residences in particular are part of a continuum and have the opportunity to be reinvented with each new inhabitant. The extension of that continuum that a new resident brings to a piece of historic architecture is all the more revitalizing if it is the result of weaving together both old and new. The acid test is, of course, whether or not the outcome is more livable, and beautiful, than what existed before. I think you will find that to be the case with each of the houses that follow—and I heartily encourage you to join me in the journey of discovery that this book offers.

And besides, who doesn't love a story about second chances?

OPPOSITE: Longbranch, Key Peninsula, Washington, designed by Jim Olson.