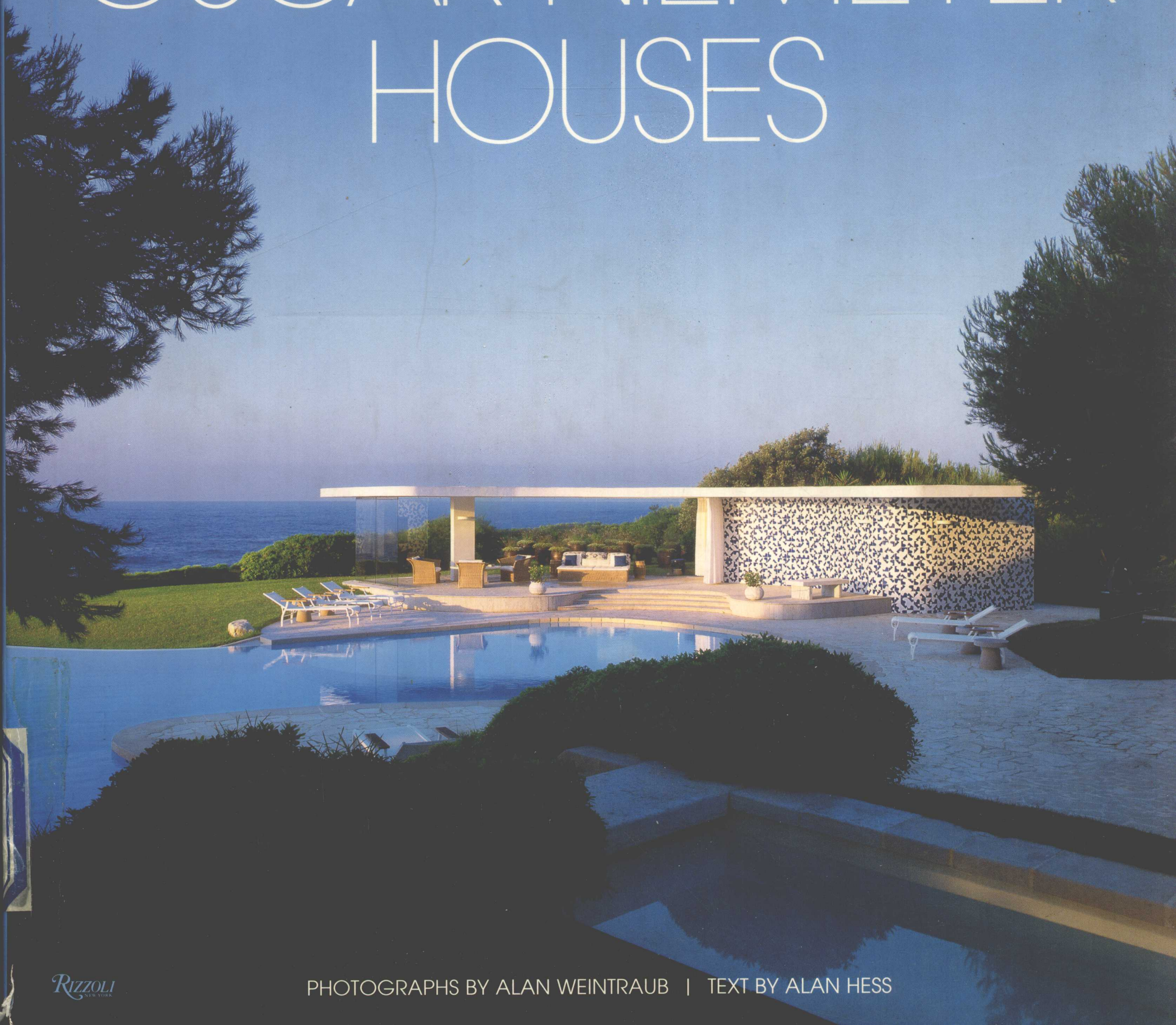


OSCAR NIEMEYER HOUSES



OSCAR NIEMEYER HOUSES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN WEINTRAUB | TEXT BY ALAN HESS

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK

NOTE TO THE READER:

The dates given for the houses are the date of design, followed by the date of construction if it was later. The locations include the neighborhood, the city, and the state where possible; the abbreviations RJ, SP, MG and DF stand for the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and the Federal District of Brasília.

Sources differ on the dates and locations of many houses and unbuilt house designs. With the Fundação Oscar Niemeyer we have attempted to come up with as complete and accurate a list of Niemeyer's single family residential designs as possible. Many of those that were built have been altered over the years; we have attempted to note the changes made to the original designs whenever possible.

First published in the United States of America in 2006 by
RIZZOLI INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS, INC.
300 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010
www.rizzoliusa.com

ISBN-13: 978-0-8478-2798-5
LCCN: 2005937397

© 2006 Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
Photography (except as noted below) © 2006 Alan Weintraub/Arcaid@arcaid.co.uk
Text © 2006 Alan Hess

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior consent of the publisher.

Designed by Zand Gee Design

Printed and bound in China

2009 2010 / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

- P. 1: Oscar Niemeyer, his wife Annita, and their grandson Kadu at their home in Canoas, 1959.
Photo by Dmitri Kessel/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images Owned.
- P. 2: Alberto Dalva Simão House, Belo Horizonte, MG, 1954.
- Pp. 4–5, 228: Oscar Niemeyer House, Canoas, Rio de Janeiro, RJ 1953.
- Pp. 6–7: Drawing of Oscar Niemeyer House, Mendes, RJ, 1949.
- P. 10: "Now we are on Avenida Atlântica, where all the rooms are taken over by the bay landscape while the beach and the sea beckon to us, calling us to stroll along its shores."
View from Niemeyer's current office on Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro.
- P. 11: The architect at his easel, 2004.
- P. 14: Niemeyer's private office.
- Pp. 16–17: Office conference area. Lounge chair and bench are Niemeyer's designs.
- P. 18: Juscelino Kubitschek House, Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, MG, 1943.
- P. 43: Orestes Quêrcia House, Pedregulho, SP, 1990.
- P. 222: Niemeyer's current office on Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro.

All archival photographs and drawings (except as noted below) ©Fundação Oscar Niemeyer courtesy:

- Fundação Oscar Niemeyer
Arquitetura Urbanismo Oscar Niemeyer
- Pp. 22–23: Photos and drawings of Herbert Johnson house, Fortaleza, Ceara, 1942,
© S. C. Johnson & Son, Inc., and used with their permission.
- P. 35: Carmen Baldo House, Teresopolis, RJ, 1963, photos courtesy of the Baldo Family.
- P. 38: Jaburu Palace, Brasília, DF, 1975, photo from the collection of Alan Hess.

CONTENTS

9 Acknowledgments

11 Introduction

THE HOUSES OF OSCAR NIEMEYER

20 Chapter One: Houses 1936–1953

29 Chapter Two: Houses 1953–1961

36 Chapter Three: Houses 1961–2005

SELECTED HOUSES 1940–2005

44 Sr. Cavalcanti House 1940

46 Oscar Niemeyer House at Lagoa 1942

54 Francisco Inácio Peixoto House 1942

60 Mrs. Prudente de Moraes Neto House 1943/1949

64 Juscelino Kubitschek House 1943

74 Leonel Miranda House 1952/1955

82 Francisco Pignatari House 1953

88 Oscar Niemeyer House at Canoas 1953

100 Alberto Dalva Simão House 1954

110 Edmundo Cavanelas House 1954

120 Catetinho 1956

126 Oscar Niemeyer House at Brasília 1960

130 Anne and Joseph Strick House 1964

140 Nara Mondadori House 1968

154 Carmen Baldo House 1969

164 Flavio Marcilio House 1973

170 Carlos Miranda House 1983

182 Darcy Ribeiró House 1983

188 Sebastião Camargo House 1985

198 Marco Antônio Amaral Rezende House 1985

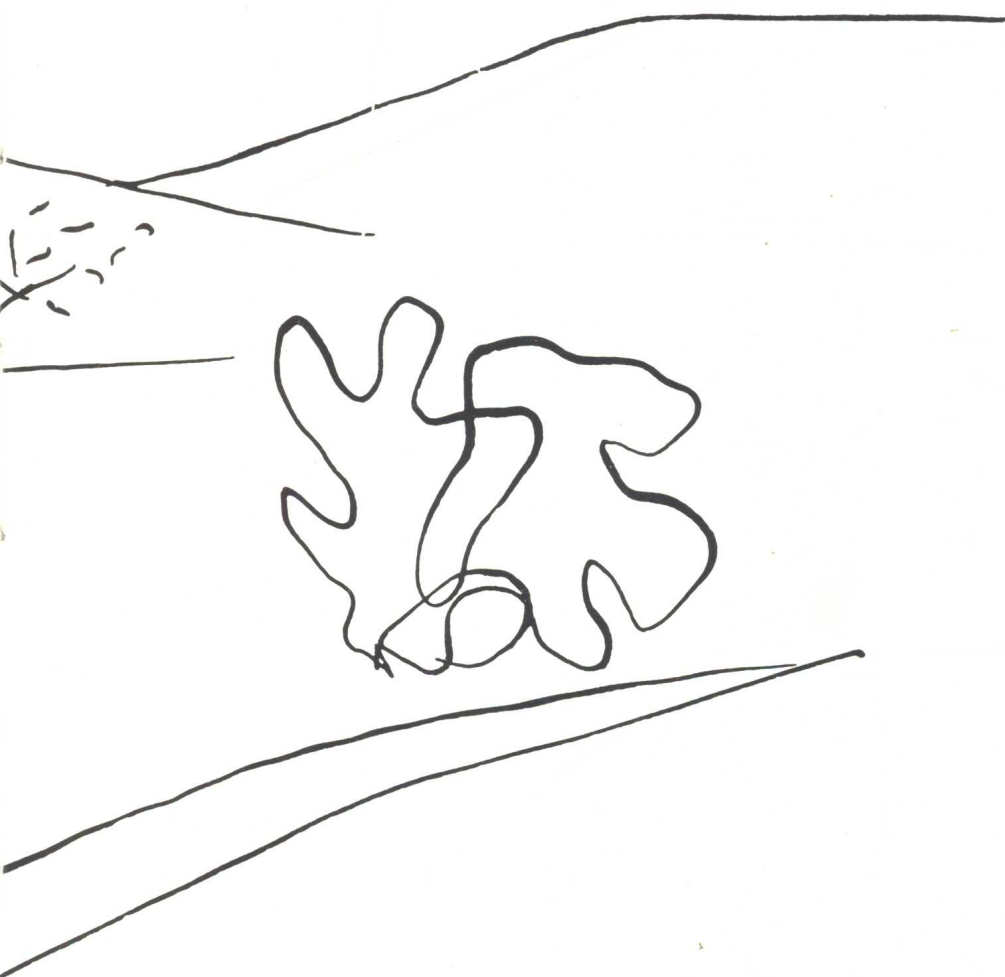
208 Orestes Quêrcia House 1990

220 Ana Elisa Niemeyer House 2005

227 Conclusion

230 Endnotes & Bibliography

231 Index







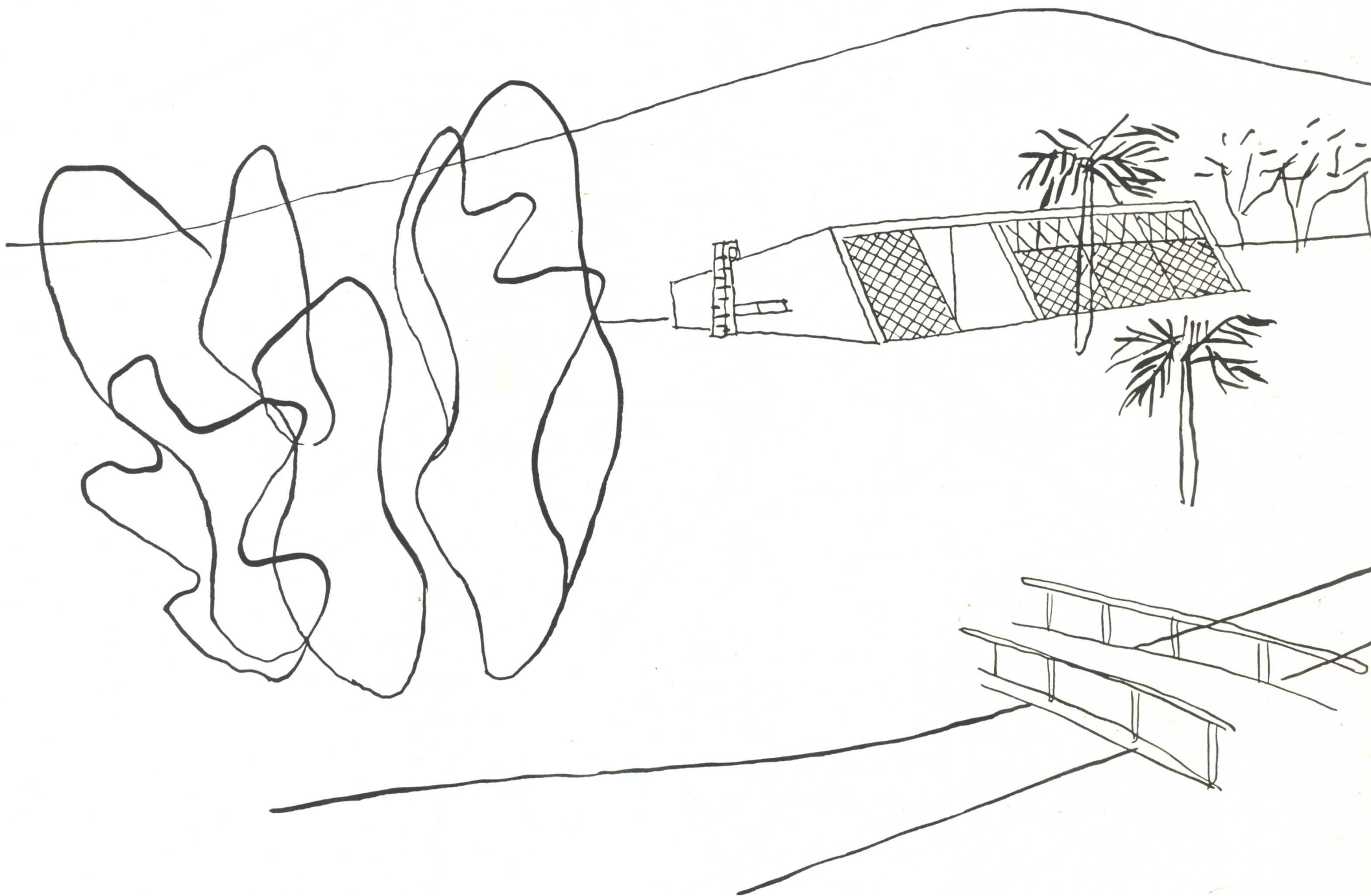
OSCAR NIEMEYER HOUSES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN WEINTRAUB | TEXT BY ALAN HESS

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK







CONTENTS

9 Acknowledgments

11 Introduction

THE HOUSES OF OSCAR NIEMEYER

20 Chapter One: Houses 1936–1953

29 Chapter Two: Houses 1953–1961

36 Chapter Three: Houses 1961–2005

SELECTED HOUSES 1940–2005

44 Sr. Cavalcanti House 1940

46 Oscar Niemeyer House at Lagoa 1942

54 Francisco Inácio Peixoto House 1942

60 Mrs. Prudente de Moraes Neto House 1943/1949

64 Juscelino Kubitschek House 1943

74 Leonel Miranda House 1952/1955

82 Francisco Pignatari House 1953

88 Oscar Niemeyer House at Canoas 1953

100 Alberto Dalva Simão House 1954

110 Edmundo Cavanelas House 1954

120 Catetinho 1956

126 Oscar Niemeyer House at Brasília 1960

130 Anne and Joseph Strick House 1964

140 Nara Mondadori House 1968

154 Carmen Baldo House 1969

164 Flavio Marcilio House 1973

170 Carlos Miranda House 1983

182 Darcy Ribeiró House 1983

188 Sebastião Camargo House 1985

198 Marco Antonio Amaral Rezende House 1985

208 Orestes Quércia House 1990

220 Ana Elisa Niemeyer House 2005

227 Conclusion

230 Endnotes & Bibliography

231 Index

NOTE TO THE READER:

The dates given for the houses are the date of design, followed by the date of construction if it was later. The locations include the neighborhood, the city, and the state where possible; the abbreviations RJ, SP, MG and DF stand for the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and the Federal District of Brasília.

Sources differ on the dates and locations of many houses and unbuilt house designs. With the Fundação Oscar Niemeyer we have attempted to come up with as complete and accurate a list of Niemeyer's single family residential designs as possible. Many of those that were built have been altered over the years; we have attempted to note the changes made to the original designs whenever possible.

First published in the United States of America in 2006 by
RIZZOLI INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS, INC.
300 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010
www.rizzoliusa.com

ISBN-13: 978-0-8478-2798-5
LCCN: 2005937397

© 2006 Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
Photography (except as noted below) © 2006 Alan Weintraub/Arcaid@arcaid.co.uk
Text © 2006 Alan Hess

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior consent of the publisher.

Designed by Zand Gee Design

Printed and bound in China

2009 2010 / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

- P. 1: Oscar Niemeyer, his wife Annita, and their grandson Kadu at their home in Canoas, 1959.
Photo by Dmitri Kessel/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images Owned.
- P. 2: Alberto Dalva Simão House, Belo Horizonte, MG, 1954.
- Pp. 4–5, 228: Oscar Niemeyer House, Canoas, Rio de Janeiro, RJ 1953.
- Pp. 6–7: Drawing of Oscar Niemeyer House, Mendes, RJ, 1949.
- P. 10: "Now we are on Avenida Atlântica, where all the rooms are taken over by the bay landscape while the beach and the sea beckon to us, calling us to stroll along its shores."
View from Niemeyer's current office on Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro.
- P. 11: The architect at his easel, 2004.
- P. 14: Niemeyer's private office.
- Pp. 16–17: Office conference area. Lounge chair and bench are Niemeyer's designs.
- P. 18: Juscelino Kubitschek House, Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, MG, 1943.
- P. 43: Orestes Quêrcia House, Pedregulho, SP, 1990.
- P. 222: Niemeyer's current office on Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro.

All archival photographs and drawings (except as noted below) ©Fundação Oscar Niemeyer courtesy:
Fundação Oscar Niemeyer
Arquitetura Urbanismo Oscar Niemeyer

Pp. 22–23: Photos and drawings of Herbert Johnson house, Fortaleza, Ceara, 1942,
© S. C. Johnson & Son, Inc., and used with their permission.

P. 35: Carmen Baldo House, Teresopolis, RJ, 1963, photos courtesy of the Baldo Family.

P. 38: Jaburu Palace, Brasília, DF, 1975, photo from the collection of Alan Hess.

For Sinclair

With Special Thanks to

Kadu Niemeyer

Thank You

Fundação Oscar Niemeyer

Arquitetura Urbanismo Oscar Niemeyer

Maria Fernanda Martins

Carmen Baldo

Elizabeth Baldo Correa

Marco Antonio Amaral Rezende

Antônio de Pádua Bittencourt Neto

Júlio da Costa

Rodrigo Carletti

José and Ana Maria Carletti

— Alan Weintraub

For Jennifer, who made writing this one a pleasure.

I would like to thank the

Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts for a grant which allowed me to travel throughout Brazil, to visit the works of Brazilian Modern architecture and landscape design, and to interview Oscar Niemeyer, Lucio Costa, and Roberto Burle Marx.

This book would not have been possible without that support. The help of Ruth Evora, Severino Garcia, and Robert and Carley Stone during those travels was also invaluable.

— Alan Hess

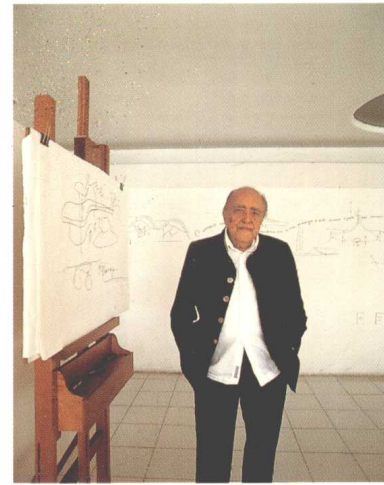
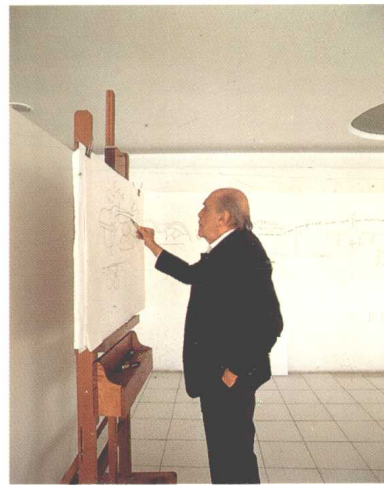
We also wish to thank the current owners of these houses for permitting us to photograph these important contributions to modern design.

For their aid in research, we greatly appreciate the help of Ana Lucia Niemeyer of the Fundação Oscar Niemeyer, João Niemeyer, Caique Niemeyer, José Carlos Sussekind, and Cecelia Scharlach, as well as the Sabastião Camargo family, Carlos and Suzanna Miranda, the Francisco Inácio Peixoto family, Maria Jacy Ribeiró, Michael and Gabrielle Boyd, Pascal Goujon, Juracy Brasiliense Guerra, Kate Micek of the S. C. Johnson Archives, Ana Elisa Niemeyer, Edgar de Picciotto, Orestes Quêrcia, the Alberto Dalva Simão family, Anne Strick, and Gilberto Strunck.



INTRODUCTION

"I am not attracted to straight angles or to the straight line, hard and inflexible, created by man.



I am attracted to free-flowing, sensual curves.

The curves

that I find in the mountains of my country, in the sinuousness of its rivers, in the waves of the ocean, and on the body of the beloved woman."

— Oscar Niemeyer¹

"I keep inside myself,
in my private museum,
everything I have seen
and loved in my life."

— André Malraux²

Oscar Niemeyer does not make it easy to study his houses. For an architect who left an impressive mark on twentieth-century architecture with his designs for cities and public buildings, private residences do not figure large. Niemeyer does not often write about them. Niemeyer himself plays down his residential designs, permitting only a few houses to be illustrated to any extent in the many books that present his work and words to the world and leaving several of them out of official lists of his work. His favorite, he allows, was a small vacation home for himself outside Rio de Janeiro—a modest remodel of a chicken house. And yet, it is important to note, the house he designed for himself in the Canoas district of Rio played an enormous role in establishing his international reputation. Architecture editors found the image of its sensuous, cloud-like roofline irresistible. It promulgated a compelling yet indisputably Modern alternative to the mechanist abstractions of European modernism.

Despite the relative neglect of Niemeyer's residential work by the architect and most critics, it deserves our attention. Designed throughout his long life and career, the houses parallel and sometimes anticipate the revolutionary concepts of his larger projects, and so they enrich our understanding of his art. They are also extraordinary, varied, and pleasurable designs that reward the viewer.

There is one other reason to look at these overlooked designs: they merit comparison to the residential work of other great modernists in the fertile mid-century period. There is still much to learn about twentieth-century modernism. Oscar Niemeyer is the only one of the great architects who shaped that tidal wave to live—and, remarkably, work—into the twenty-first century.

Niemeyer spearheaded a major expansion of this movement by unashamedly taking its forms beyond rationalism into a broader realm of imagination and cultural expression. Though he designed for places ranging from Norway to the Middle East, and South America to California, Niemeyer was first and foremost a Brazilian and a resident of the agreeable oceanside city of Rio de Janeiro. He was well versed in modernism, learning at the feet of Charles Édouard Jeanneret Le Corbusier (b. 1887). But it was the Brazilian side of his nature and life that lead him to transform architecture.

Of course for a proponent of modern life and technology, a career in Brazil was both a blessing and a hindrance. The government of Getulio Vargas—a dictator

after 1937—had little experience with the centralized planning that allowed Mexico to undertake several large public projects that fostered the Modern style. Brazil's industries likewise were not yet focused on standardization for mass production, and the economy was too stratified to create a large consumer class. Brazil might have been too preoccupied with industrial and economic development to spend much energy or wealth on architecture. Yet several times during his long career Niemeyer found himself positioned to leverage his talent, friendships, and patrons to catapult himself into large projects that captured the world's attention. He took superb advantage of this good fortune with dramatic self-possession and self-promotion that complemented his talent.

"Our modern architecture reflects the social contradictions in which we live and in which it has developed," Niemeyer lamented in the mid-1950s. "Presented to clients not interested in problems of a general building economy and to a governmental body that shies from plans of national dimensions and from large scale construction projects, our architecture is forced to make improvisation its basic element."³

But if the economic and political landscape made Brazil an unlikely place for Modern architecture, the natural landscape of Brazil (named, after all, for the dye-producing *Bresil* tree) was the ideal inspiration for Niemeyer's revolution.⁴ Fly into Santos Dumont airport—the airport perched between downtown Rio and the shore of Guanabara Bay—and you'll see. The landscape in which Niemeyer was born and raised is one of stunning natural power and beauty. As a child he would outline with his finger the shapes of the white clouds and the mountains, wreathed in greenery, rising dramatically over the bay. The white beaches scalloped the shoreline. Even Le Corbusier, visiting Rio first in 1929, was impressed, noting the "green flames above the city."⁵ The landscape of Brazil is vast, diverse, exotic, and nearly as vast as the continental United States. In the Brazilian landscape humans have no choice but to accommodate nature.

Overlaid with the complexities of Brazil's history and stratified society, these scenes evoke contradictions that Niemeyer's designs have always balanced: natural shapes created by artificial technology, structural logic and ecstatic emotions, simple forms and complex purposes. Similar contradictions are seen in the man: a longtime member of the Communist Party of Brazil, he built homes for some of the wealthiest Brazilians.

His houses reflect this diversity. He built them on hillsides, in cities, on coastlines and deserts, in suburbs and mountainous countryside. He built in concrete, brick, steel, and wood, on limited budgets for middle-class friends and family members, and on lavish budgets for Brazil's plutocrats. He designed buildings for the dictator Getulio Vargas, for enlightened civil servants like Gustavo Capanema, for publishing and construction magnates, for intellectual friends, and the French Communist Party. Though as a communist he might have been expected to focus on social architecture (and he was criticized for not doing so), as an architect he simply wanted to build.

"I never allowed my political convictions to affect my friendships," Niemeyer explains. "I have right-wing friends—good friends—who I believe are mistaken, and they think the same thing about me. We have always been good companions. The same thing happens in my professional life. I publicly declare to be a Communist, and those who request my services accept me cordially. They believe in my architecture and in my integrity."⁶

Niemeyer's houses have no single theme. They continue to evolve throughout his career, responding primarily to the specifics of site, client, and purpose. They seek the idiosyncratic rather than the universal as their root inspiration. On a small, often jewel-like scale, many Niemeyer houses are idealized statements of his architectural ideas, the essence of his vision of dramatic sites and the art of life, delight, and imagination.

The house designs show the wide range and continuing development of his ideas. The earliest designs are influenced by the ideas of Le Corbusier, whom he admired while at architecture school, and with whom he worked in 1936 on the team that designed the landmark Ministry of Education and Health skyscraper in Rio. But even at this early point, his unapologetic adaptations to Brazilian sites and culture can be detected. He was determined to go his own way in architecture, and he took architecture with him,

Later houses show Niemeyer's powerful exploration of free form and open space, in a series of houses that stand comparison with the best known statements of the Modern residence in the world: with Phillip Johnson's Glass House in Connecticut, with Wright's Fallingwater, with Alvar Aalto's Villa Mairea. Other houses illuminate Niemeyer's deep appreciation of historical architecture, especially the Portuguese