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Contact: Suzanne Fedoruk

sfedoruk@mn.rr.com

612.861.7807

CREATING THE NOT SO BIG HOUSE ***Insights and Ideas for the New American Home***

by Sarah Susanka
with photographs by Grey Crawford

CREATING THE NOT SO BIG HOUSE describes the design concepts that can take the experience of living in a house from mere shelter to the art of dwelling.

—Sarah Susanka

Sarah Susanka's widely acclaimed and best-selling first book, *The Not So Big House*, created a movement that's changing the way Americans think about their homes. Seeking other like-minded architects who were using the same better-not-bigger approach, Susanka follows that phenomenal success with ***CREATING THE NOT SO BIG HOUSE***, bringing together 25 beautifully designed new and remodeled homes that demonstrate the comfort, shelter, and practical beauty behind the Not So Big House concept. From these examples, Susanka outlines a new design language for homeowners, builders and architects to use to create their own Not So Big Houses.

By developing this common design language, Susanka gives readers new tools they need to communicate to architects and builders exactly what they want, well beyond the basics of square footage as represented on a floorplan. Believing that all of the information about the comfort and livability of a home can be found on the blueprint, many consumers make decisions that create oversized rooms and cold, impersonal spaces. Just as a roadmap shows us the two-dimensional relationship between places and how to move among them, a floorplan shows a home in that same flat way. What's missing is an understanding of how height, scale and personal details create a comfortable home. Susanka calls this idea *Thinking In The Third Dimension*. Other innovative concepts include:

- ***Framed Openings*** allow you to create the illusion of more space, defining one room from another, just as you would with a doorway. Since a framed opening is wider than a normal doorway, it doesn't obstruct view, but it does indicate that you are entering a new area as you move through it.

(more)

- ***Spatial Layering***—takes the concept of framed openings one step further. By using a series of openings and surfaces to subtly break the perceived space into segments, it is both more comprehensible to the eye and more intriguing—encouraging you to explore around each edge and corner. Successive layers also give the impression that an area is larger than it actually is.
- ***Visual Weight*** can lend a greater sense of shelter to a room particularly one with a high ceiling. By darkening a ceiling, or by adding texture, or both, you can manipulate the sense of scale, making it seem heavier, and therefore apparently not as tall.

With each chapter, photographs showing these concepts complement floorplans to demonstrate how the crucial third dimension bridges the distance between two-dimensional plans and a comfortable, beautiful home. These Not So Big homes represent a wide array of architectural styles from a Minnesota farmhouse, to a Southwestern adobe, to a New York apartment, and many more. But it is the Not So Big design concepts that *underlie* stylistic differences that makes them all so delightful to live in.

From the dozens of homes in ***CREATING THE NOT SO BIG HOUSE***, Susanka spotlights the common design elements that make spaces work, explaining how and why they work and offering a language that anyone can use to create a home that fits the way they live.

CREATING THE NOT SO BIG HOUSE: Insights and Ideas for the New American Home

by Sarah Susanka

Photographs by Grey Crawford

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