

"Art and architecture are a way of exploring the world and expressing yourself," says Christopher Coy of Barnes Coy Architects, who joined fellow architect Robert Barnes to establish the firm in the late 1980s. The two met in boarding school and were both influenced by the school's modern architecture. They enjoy the stimulation of working directly with homeowners, and they take inspiration from the endless variation and complexities of residential projects. The firm also has a commercial portfolio that includes the 550,000-square-foot Solaris development in Vail, Colorado.

Maintaining a modestly sized firm allows the principals to stay involved in every step of the process. During its first several years, Barnes Coy maintained a construction management division in order to ensure correct execution of designs. Today the firm considers a continued strong on-site presence necessary in order to monitor the builder's progress and guarantee detail adherence.

The property owner's desires and requirements—the program—together with the site context help to generate an original design response. This method results in projects true to the firm's core belief that architecture begins with the site and is further informed by the end user's program.



"Houses interest us because they contain elements of every building type: sanctuary, museum, and gathering place."

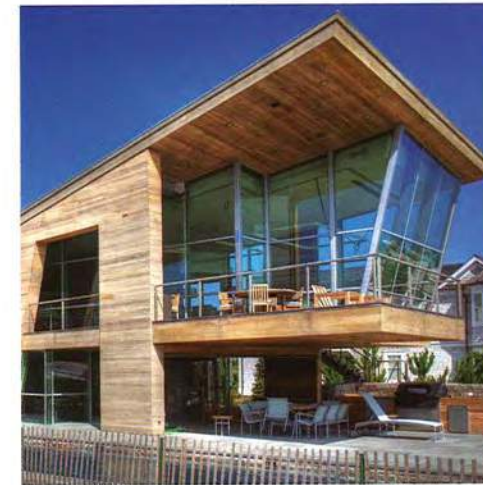
—Christopher Coy





“Executing the same concept in different ways keeps designs fresh. It’s best to eschew developing a predictable house style.”

—Robert Barnes



ABOVE, FACING PAGE & PREVIOUS PAGES: We built the Westhampton house to contain elements tailored to the residents’ lifestyle. Located on a tenuous, low-lying barrier island of sand between the Atlantic Ocean and the bay, the house is oriented to the cardinal points of the compass. The fissure between the master suite and the rest of the house is aligned along the north-south axis. A trumpet-shaped deck projects out toward the ocean along with the living room, both cantilevered above a patio with a built-in barbecue and seating around an outdoor fireplace. Next to the patio is a 50-foot rectangular pool terminated at the seaward end by a Jacuzzi and a teak pad for drying and sunning. The principal materials, such as center-matched cedar, cedar shingles, Pennsylvania limestone, and the glass curtain wall, pass from exterior to interior to express the continuity of space.

Photographs by Paul Domzal

“Even in northern climates,
we emphasize indoor-outdoor
living by creating ambiguity
between spaces through the
use of covered loggias
with fireplaces.”

—Christopher Coy



RIGHT: To create a telescopic viewing device that frames views, we designed sheltering walls and a stainless steel shade device to guide the eye. The Pennsylvania limestone walls establish a sense of permanence. The island house's entryway and the master bedroom face east to take best advantage of the sunrise over the sea.

Photograph by Lynne Grossman



“Residential architecture allows us to work on the front lines, involved in a little bit of everything.”

—Robert Barnes



ABOVE & FACING PAGE: Everything in the plan of the island house is part of our design for optimal viewing conditions. Black volcanic rock from Indonesia lines the pool to keep the water warm and match the deep blue color of the sea, further enhancing the views. Inside, the open plan contains comfortable seating, the dining table, and an open kitchen with island, concrete countertops, and full-height cabinetry. To maintain transparency throughout the space, cantilevered treads jut out from the stone wall leading up to the second level. Teak and glass pocket doors open the entire wall out to the patio and zero-edge pool. As an eco-conscious touch, the house’s air-conditioning system pumps the heat removed from the house into the pool.

Photographs by Lynne Grossman

“Modern houses can be durable, warm, and sheltering. If the form makes rational sense, the materials can be anything.”

—Christopher Coy



ABOVE & FACING PAGE: A cantilevered overhang protrudes over the entrance to the East Hampton waterfront house. A low stone wall gives privacy to the inner courtyard that adds daylight to the living room. While the upper rooms are cantilevered, the downstairs rooms are two-sided glass boxes framed by stone walls on either end. Bright red beams nod to the owner's Chinese heritage. As the master bedroom faces the woods, the residents can enjoy total transparency while maintaining privacy. Through full-height sliding glass walls on both sides of the loggia fireplace, the house blurs the lines between indoor and outdoor. Pennsylvania limestone walls and bluestone from Rajasthan, India, on the terraces and floors provide a comforting sense of shelter.

Photographs by Paul Domzal

