TOWN HOUSE
Creating the New American

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Creating the New American Town House
Alexander Gorlin

Once the bastion of the haute bourgeoisie, the town house has now been embraced by a larger group of people—families with young children, single urban professionals, and retired couples, many of whom are now returning to the inner city, and many others favoring town house developments. In this follow-up volume to The New American Town House, architect Alexander Gorlin once again explores a spectacular array of diverse town house designs that carry the familiar symbol of architectural innovation and refinement into the twenty-first century. Creating the New American Town House features thirty cutting-edge town houses—each drawn from architectural tradition while achieving originality and enhancing the urban landscape by alternately breaking from and working within the limitations of the town house form. Within the typical form of several-story city houses bounded by parallel walls presented here are ingenious, exquisite, and, above all, extremely livable solutions to the constraints of this classic urban housing type.

Ranging from sites in New York, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., each of the buildings featured in Creating the New American Town House represents an eloquent contribution to the form from such esteemed architects and designers as Reed Krakoff, Hariri & Hariri, Stanley Saitowitz, and 1100 Architects. Each project is extensively illustrated with full-color photography as well as plans and drawings. Alexander Gorlin’s insightful text continues the discourse begun in his The New American Town House, surveying the adaptation of this beloved urban dwelling to the demands of a new century.
This town house for a bachelor in the Bucktown section of Chicago is a gleaming modern structure that floats above its more traditional neighbors. Set back behind a brick-walled garden, a steel and stone stair cuts through the volume of the house leading directly from the street to the main living level on the second floor and beyond to the third level and roof terraces above. On the main level, a double-height space contains the open loft of the kitchen, living, and dining areas. The vertically oriented living room is framed by large expanses of glass, which open onto the garden below and provide views of the street. Above, the suspended glass box of the master bedroom and bathroom floats. The sensual space of the glass shower and freestanding tub is directly open to the master bedroom blurring the boundaries between these traditionally separate areas. At both ends, glass walls afford views of the city. The clothes closet is completely open to view, where the client’s perfectly coordinated suits hang for all the world to see, allowing him to “shop” daily for his suit of choice—recalling perhaps a scene for American Gigolo. Above is a terrace with views to downtown Chicago. A luminous screen of parachute cloth curtains—a theatrical gesture—defines the space of the dining room, with its own terrace above the garage. On the lower level are a guest bedroom and an exercise space. Materials are limited to a minimally cool palette of white painted steel, white statuary marble for all countertops, gray-toned stone floors from China, and white plaster walls.