

## Photographs of Philadelphia Homes Seeing the Extraordinary in the Everyday

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

*Philadelphia: City of Homes*, by architect and Center City resident David S. Traub, is a beautiful book of full-color art photographs of Philadelphia homes—some ordinary, some unique—illustrating an immense variety of architectural styles, sizes, and ages, all designed as single-family dwellings characteristic of the city of Philadelphia. The book will appeal to lovers of architecture, photography, and unique aspects of Philadelphia.

The first thing you will probably want to do is page through the book looking for houses that you recognize in the Rittenhouse Square and Fitler Square neighborhoods—and there are plenty of them. You might even see your own home or one in another neighborhood where you once lived. Homes that have become familiar and possibly don't attract our notice when we pass them every day appear in the book as works of art.

Each of the book's 108 pages contains, along with color photographs, Traub's short narratives, lovingly citing architectural styles and details, neighborhood histories, streetscapes, and, in some cases, the names of architects.

The rowhouse, aka rowhome, represents 70 percent of the 400,000 homes in Philadelphia. A variation of this style is the townhouse, aka townhome. Traub attempts to explain the subtle difference based on architecture, location, and socio-economic class of inhabitants; still, all are adjoining homes in a row. Other styles represented in the book are twin, courtyard and walkway, trinity, detached, mansions and carriage houses, modern, new vernacular, and some houses that are just unique.

Traub has created two other photographic books of Philadelphia architecture: *Searching for Philadelphia: The Concealed City*; and *Discovering Philadelphia: Places Little Known*.



Mansion on corner of 19th Street and Delancey Place (p. 68)

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Traub studied architecture at the University of Illinois and at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a Master of Architecture degree. At Penn in 1964, he studied in the Master Class of the famous architect Louis I. Kahn. From 1970 to 73, he worked in Kahn's firm on two of their most important projects, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Mellon Museum of British Art at Yale University in New Haven. In 1974 he established his own firm, David S. Traub Associates, Architects, Planners and Interior Designers.

Buy the book at Head House Books on 2nd Street or Barnes and Noble on Rittenhouse Square, or borrow it from the Philadelphia City Institute library on Rittenhouse Square.



House on 2200 Block of Rittenhouse Street (p. 16)