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Vermont Villa

A New England house combines design precedents.

PROJECT: RESIDENCE,
WINDSOR COUNTY, VT

ARCHITECT: ALBERT, RIGHTER
& TITTMANN ARCHITECTS,
INC., BOSTON, MA; JOHN B.
TITTMANN, AIA, PRINCIPAL
IN CHARGE; J. B. CLANCY,
AIA, PROJECT ARCHITECT

Over the years, the Boston-based firm Albert, Righter & Tittmann (AR&T) has designed dozens of traditionally inspired yet unique residences that bear the distinct touch of principals Jacob Albert, James Righter and John Tittmann. In Windsor County, VT, a recently completed, 5,500-sq.-ft. weekend/vacation house continues that tradition, as local farmhouse meets Neoclassical European villa.

The combination of seemingly unrelated parts grew out of the client's disparate goals: the house needed to both feel as though it belonged in Vermont and pay homage to his German background. To satisfy those requirements, principal-in-charge John Tittmann created an arrival wing that reflects the local farmhouse vernacular and a main wing inspired by the villas of the 19th-century German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel.

"The idea was that it's a house that belongs in Vermont," says Tittmann. "But when you go through the house to the private side, it has its own presence."

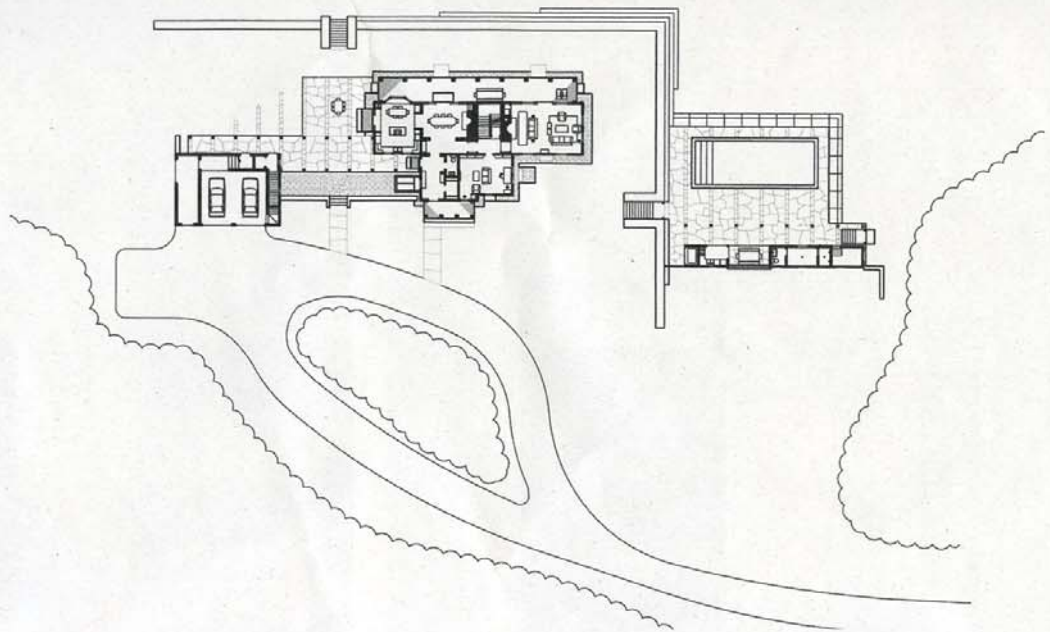
On the east-facing entry wing, AR&T created a relaxed composition with white clapboards, square porch posts, two-over-two windows with green shutters and eaves without flat soffits. On the west façade, tall French doors, bracketed roof overhangs and a severe regularity speak to Neoclassical European villa traditions.

"The major wing of the house is a temple form and a Classicizing element that picks up, somewhat vaguely, on Schinkel's villa architecture," says Tittmann, who notes that the design is slightly experimental. "It is a collage in the sense that you do have these two unrelated parts coming together. You could say that one has nothing to do

Top: Boston, MA-based Albert, Righter & Tittmann designed this 5,500-sq.-ft. home, along with a 1,700-sq.-ft. barn and 860-sq.-ft. pool house, in Windsor County, VT. The arrival wing draws on local farmhouse traditions, including a steep gable, an additive shed, a simple porch with square posts and two-over-two, double-hung windows. *All photos:*

Robert Benson Photography

On a site that lacks southern exposure, the house was oriented to take advantage of the primary views to the west. A porch stretches the length of the west-facing façade, while a covered walkway links the main house and the barn to the south. Site plan: courtesy of Albert, Righter & Tittmann, Inc.



with the other, but many houses have different characters to them. It's a long way from the Villa Rotunda, where every piece is part of one single whole, but it's a hybrid the way we Americans are hybrid. We are international, but we are local."

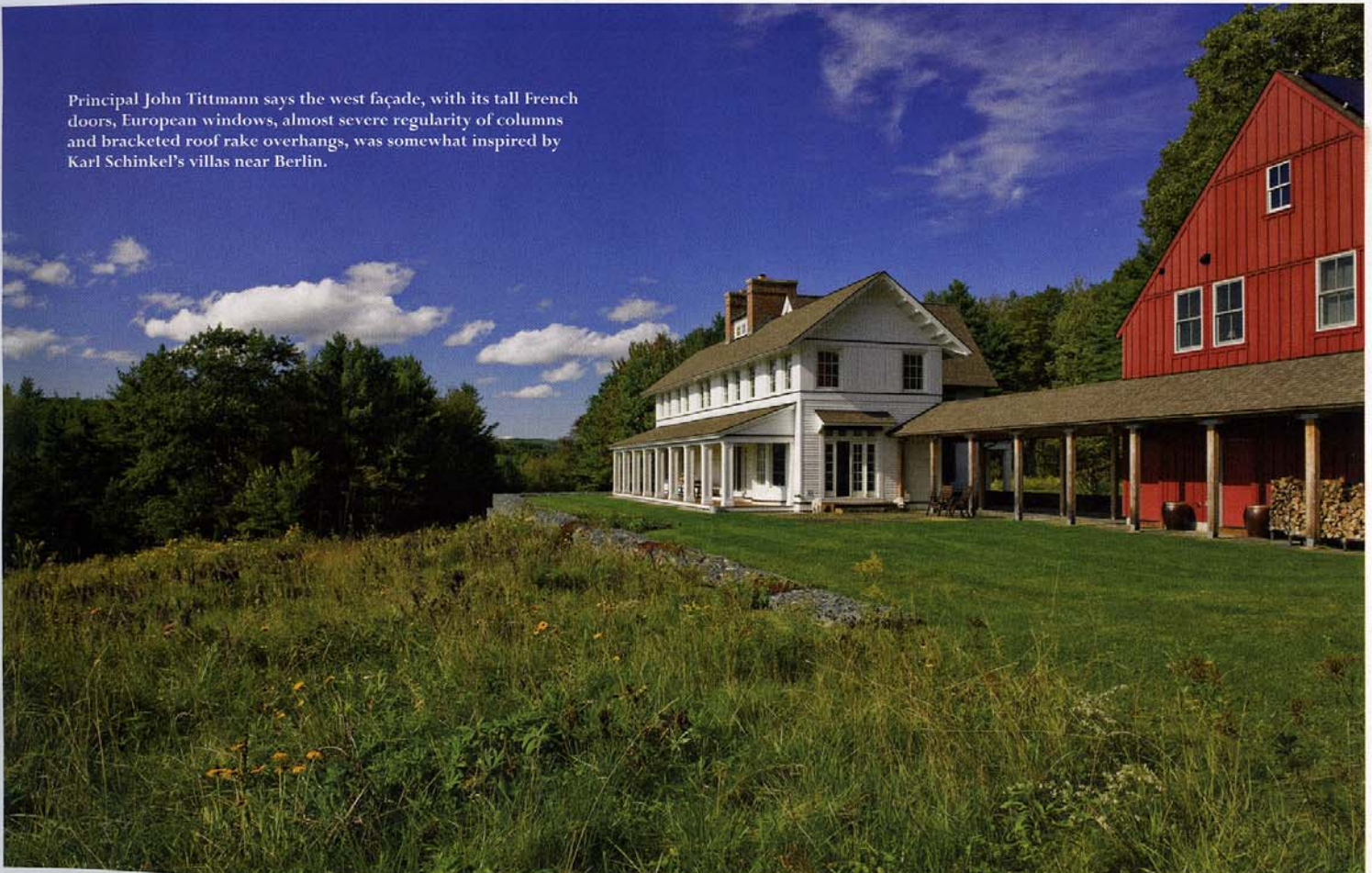
In the interior, a minimalist aesthetic much sparer than typical AR&T projects guided the design, a process that Tittmann describes as tuning the level of ornament to what the client was looking for. "The interior added a third strategy to the design," he says, "but, overall, it does what a lot of our houses do. We are very mindful of having light on both sides. The primary views and light are to the west, and the long, thin design gives all the rooms western views." On the first floor, those rooms include the kitchen, dining room, liv-

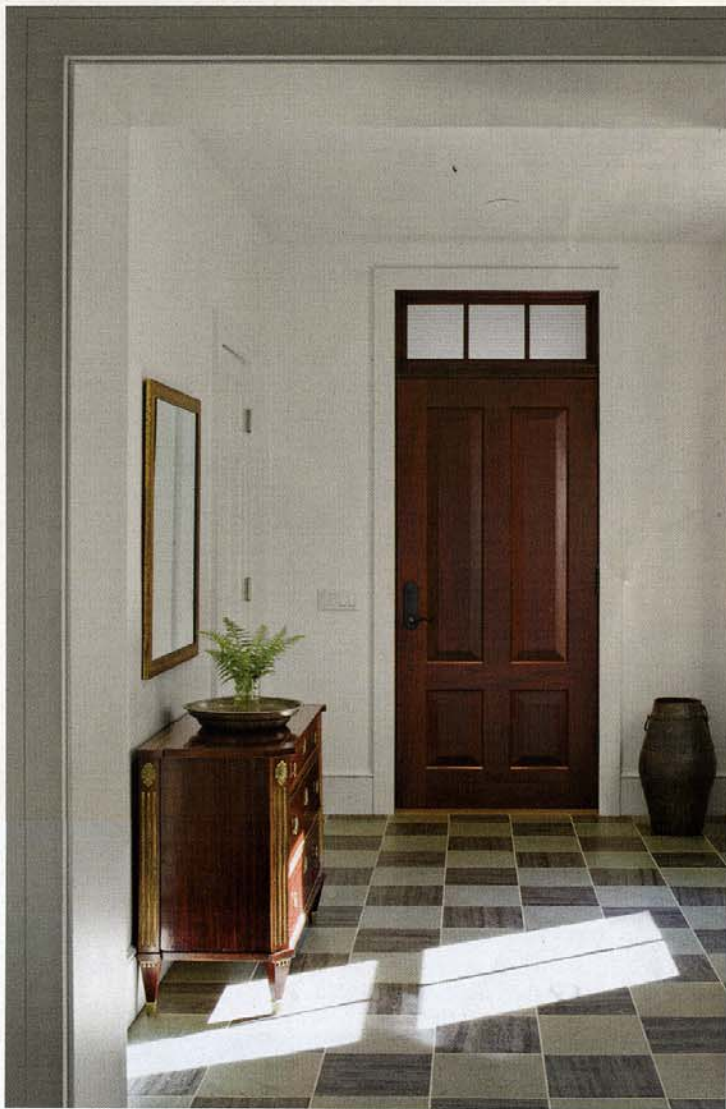
ing room, library, powder room and an expansive porch. The second floor includes four bedrooms and three bathrooms.

The windows were supplied by Marvin Windows & Doors, while the doors were supplied by Marvin and Brosco. Other key suppliers included Fair Haven, VT-based Vermont Structural Slate (flooring); Fall River, MA-based Lightolier (lighting); and Wayne, NJ-based GAF Materials Corp. (Timberline roofing).

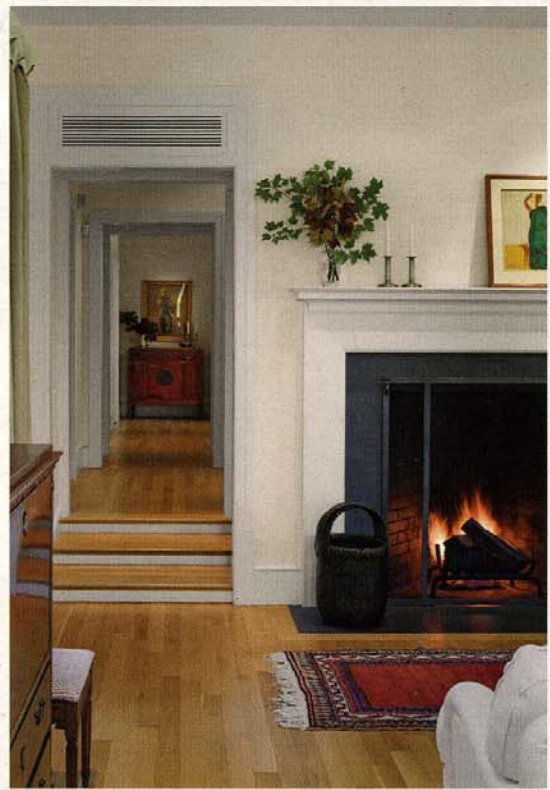
Along with the main house, the project also included an 860-sq.-ft. pool house and a 1,700-sq.-ft. barn. While photovoltaics were placed on the south-facing roof of the barn, Tittmann says that the best green energy system is an efficient envelope; the house has a high degree of insulation and all of the framing is air-sealed.

Principal John Tittmann says the west façade, with its tall French doors, European windows, almost severe regularity of columns and bracketed roof rake overhangs, was somewhat inspired by Karl Schinkel's villas near Berlin.





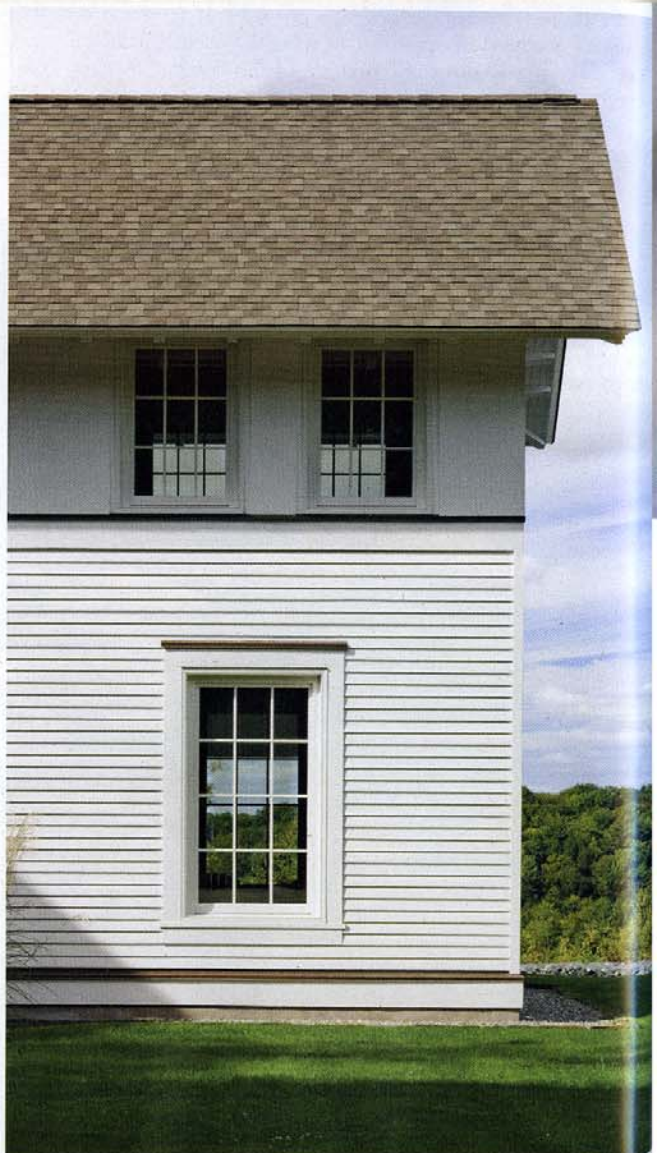
In contrast to the exterior, the client desired a sparer, less ornamented, minimalist interior; the entry features a Gustavian bureau and a gray and white color scheme.



Axial views of the interior as seen in the living room to the study.

A colonnade linking the house and barn features rustic, locally milled, cedar columns that contrast the robust, high-style columns of the main porch. "There is a hierarchy stepping down from high to low, from the main house to both the farmhouse wing and the barn," says Tittmann. "There is high and low style, and near and far history all mixed together. We weren't trying to replicate anything here – we were trying to make it particular, but universal.

"What the house is trying to do is pick up multiple histories at the same time. It's trying to pick up the local Vermont history, as well as the personal history of the client, but not in a way that would be meaningless to someone else. People don't have to know about Schinkel to pick up the temple form. The temple form is a kind of an abstraction of a Doric temple. The way that it is sited, with the plinth that we created for it, creates a kind of acropolis. So there is Vermont, there is Schinkel and there is ancient Greece, all rolled into one element." – *Will Holloway*



Right: The deep overhang of the eave and the rake pays homage to Schinkel's Court Gardener House in Potsdam, Germany.