

a reflection, a hybrid of thought, a way of life, a refuge, a haus of function.

It's an idea.

 FISHAUS

IT'S AN IDEA...

That a home is a retreat from a society that demands of far too many an unreasonable sacrifice. A FISHAUS is designed and built to be a refuge for the human spirit: a home of beauty, simplicity, function, sustainability and craftsmanship. We believe that by increasing quality and tailoring our houses to the way we use them, we can enhance the way we live.

In 1900, the American public was struggling with urban congestion and the excesses of over consumption — and charged with new concerns for nature and family. Today, as if we lifted our social concerns from the history of this bygone era, people are talking about paring back life to blissful essentials.

IT'S A REFLECTION...

At FISHAUS, we define ourselves as “Craftsman Builders.” We draw influence and inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement, which dawned in the late 1800s. This movement began as a response to the excesses of the Industrial Revolution and became a reflection and voice for simplicity in design and good craftsmanship. Like the great craftsmen before us, our mission at FISHAUS is to build good homes for and with good people, where tools and materials are used with respect and care and where what we create is a joy to the maker and the user.

IT'S A HYBRID OF THOUGHT...

FISHAUS draws from the thoughts and ideas of various schools of building and design. It also borrows conversations from history and culture. Our homes showcase the incredible craftsmanship and beauty of a “traditional” way of life. We are students and proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement started over a hundred years ago because we find much good there.

FISHAUS makes good use of the “modern” era’s development and use of today’s technology to serve our customers. Technology that serves us by providing sustainable products that protect and enhance our environment is good. We seek to use these advances wherever we have the opportunity. We also enlist state-of-the-art software to assist our company and customers in the building process.

FISHAUS borrows values and concepts from today’s “postmodern” world. We are about rebuilding the concepts of neighborhood and community. We seek to promote the improvement of caring relationships by the way we treat our customer, the product and the process. We are about social conscience and optimism. We are about spirituality, nature, authenticity and story. FISHAUS builds these ideals into each home and unifies them under one roof.

IT'S A WAY TO LIVE...

We build homes that are based upon fundamental principles of quality, simplicity, honesty and usefulness. The kind of houses whose inhabitants remember all their lives as home. We build a home to reflect and shape these values. A FISHAUS promotes a way of life.



CASE STUDY: THE HILL HOUSE / NEWTON, IOWA

When the Hills’ previous house was destroyed by a fire, they were faced with the difficult task of rebuilding. After reading *The Not So Big House* by Sarah Susanka, they sought out SALA architects and Michaela Mahady to design their new home. They came to FISHAUS to build it (see the architect’s rendering above). The Hill house is truly a “not so big house.” It is significantly smaller than their previous house, but more efficient and reflective of their needs and values. It is a FISHAUS.

■ home

A refuge for the human spirit. A place people remember and long for. A place that brings a sense of peace, comfort and joy to both the maker and the user. A place built for the way we wish to live.

■ haus

It's our passion to do good work; "good work uses no thing without respect and care." — Wendel Berry

As the principal of FISHAUS Craftsman Builders, this is the promise David Fish makes with each home he and the FISHAUS craftsmen create. David has a 24-year history as a homebuilder, trim carpenter and custom cabinetmaker. A FISHAUS is a home where simplicity is the best ornament, a skillfully crafted home with enduring value. (David "FISH" + HAUS = FISHAUS)

"We should look more closely at ourselves, at how we want to live, at what inspires us, and at what our planet needs to return to balance. If we can start reflecting these values in our houses, we will make a small but significant step in helping humanity achieve the extraordinary spirit that all are born with. Over time we can too easily become jaundiced to the simple pleasures of existence, and our homes become just one more chore to maintain. What if instead they daily inspired us, filling us with feelings of appreciation for the richness that always surrounds us — if we only will look."

— Sarah Susanka

It's a world of paradox that in our time in history we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less. **We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time;** we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, stay up late, get up tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. **We've learned how to make a living, but not a life;** we've added years to life, not life to years.

We've been to the moon, but have trouble crossing the street to greet a neighbor. **We've done larger things, but not better things.** We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've split the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. **We've learned to rush, but not to wait.**

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion; tall men and short character; steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure, but less fun; more food, but less nutrition. These are days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes.

These are days of quick trips and disposable everything. A time with much in the show window but little in the stockroom; **a time yet to choose how to live.** A time to share this insight or hit delete.*

*Adapted from "The Paradox of Our Time" — By George Carlin

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