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RICHARD MANION, AIA

## Southern California Traditional

*Jan Horn, Founder and Executive Director,  
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As a city of creative transplants and diverse cultural influences, Los Angeles is home to a range of traditional architectural styles, including Spanish, Mediterranean, Neo-Classical and Tudor. There is perhaps no other L.A. architect more attuned to this fact than Richard Manion, AIA, who has designed some of the grandest and most illustrious traditional estates in the city. In many respects, Manion could be considered the father of contemporary West Coast traditional architecture. He defines West Coast traditional architecture as “inspired by the classical and vernacular houses of Europe and various regions of the United States, yet adapted to the casual lifestyle and mild climate of the West Coast.” In other words, Manion might be a traditionalist at heart, but Southern California is still in his bones.

“Southern California living is all about the dialogue between indoor and outdoor living throughout the year,” he says. “I like to incorporate this through the use of generous doors and windows that extend the interior view to the outside and create light-filled interiors, providing outdoor rooms and spaces such as loggias and verandas that function as outdoor living rooms for lounging, dining and entertaining, and have destinations in the landscape that provide such architectural features as outdoor fireplaces, pergolas and gazebos.”

Manion admits he does not favor one traditional style over another, saying he appreciates English styles “for their exquisite millwork and cabinetry,” French styles “for their elegant proportions and subtle architectural details,” Italian styles “for their warmth,” and Mediterranean styles “for their California heritage and landscapes.” But one look at Sycamores, an English Country-inspired residence that he designed for a family in Holmby Hills, and you understand just how far the depths of his West Coast traditional roots go. Envisioned as “an American version of the English country house,” the estate features bricks handmade in Maryland, a limestone entry and a library with coffered ceiling and stone floors, combined with outdoor terraces and spacious living areas with French doors opening to the outside. “It was a very personal house that emulated the work of the architect Harrie T. Lindeberg, who I greatly admire,” he recalls.

Manion is perhaps the city’s last great traditionalist, but he sounds downright modern when it comes to his advice to homeowners: “Build smaller than you think you will need and with better quality than you think is necessary. You will appreciate both in the long run.”



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