



## The State of The Economy

FEATURE ARTICLE

### The Evolution of Contemporary Architecture

By Mitch Kunik, AIA

Early 20th century "modern" architecture followed the style of famous artists such as Picasso, co-founder of the cubist movement. This was the basis for the "white box" look that we still associate with extremely modern architecture today. Then, with the "post modern" movement of the 1970s, we saw a shift to "softer," more decorated styles like Mediterranean, which has remained prominent in Florida. However, in areas such as art and fashion, we are currently seeing a move towards "cleaner," more contemporary designs.

Architectural style will also evolve as our tastes and needs adjust once again. That is why recent architecture in certain parts of the United States and other countries around the world already show this trend towards contemporary architecture.

Contemporary architecture uses materials such as stone, wood, fabrics and color to create a livable, contextual home. For example, Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Fallingwater residence used stone and wood similar to the mountain it was built on and the waterfall it was built over in a sculptural and functional way fitting into the site with timeless, simplified ornament. Modern architecture, in contrast, is all about abstract, manmade and machine. Contemporary architecture fits in with other styles and has the additional benefit of being energy-efficient.

Contemporary design evolves from the inside out – "form follows function." Items that allow for shading, ventilation and other energy-conserving elements are an integral part of the design instead of being hidden or added on. "Green" construction materials can be honestly used in lieu of additional finishes and detailing,



Photo by: Florida Construction News

which saves on construction costs. The style of the house is also a direct result of the efficiency in function and honest materials without the use of additional costly decorative roofs, towers, windows and ornamentation. History has shown that well-done contemporary architecture is a good investment.

There is a rich history of modern and contemporary architecture with Miami Beach's Art Deco, Sarasota School era with Paul Rudolph, and Palm Beach's Regency style. Miami's most recent condo boom has once again given rise to tropical

contemporary architecture with dramatic geometries, color and elevated gardens, which are being emulated around the world. As we emerge from this latest real estate cycle, people will be seeking a fresh look and contemporary architecture will be there.

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