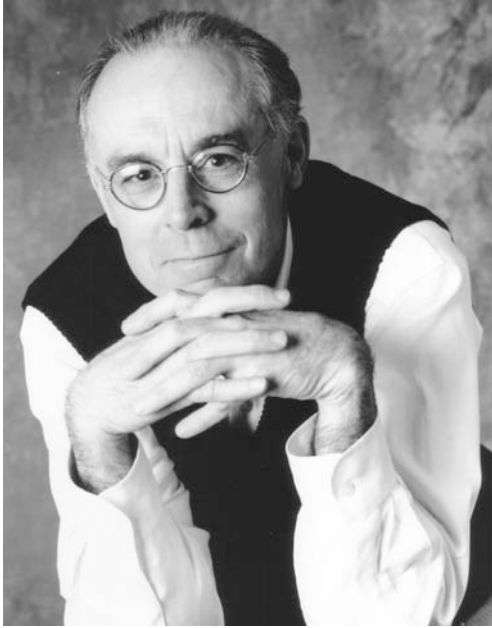


Russell Versaci Profile



Russell Versaci has been practicing traditional architecture for two decades. His accomplished firm of Versaci Neumann & Partners, founded in 1985 in Washington, DC, is noted for creating thoughtful, carefully executed designs for period-style homes that reflect a mastery of history. His firm is committed to design within the traditions of fine homebuilding that have shaped the face of America for three centuries. Frequently featured in publications, including *Traditional Home*, *Southern Accents*, *House Beautiful*, and *Southern Living*, his firm is consistently recognized for design excellence with awards from the American Institute of Architects and the Southern Living Home Awards program.

Versaci graduated from Yale College in 1970 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History. At first he pursued an interest in craftsmanship as a cabinetmaker apprenticed in a furniture design studio in Boston. His architectural studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1973) and the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts (1979) led to a Master of Architecture degree. Then he spent several years in doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania where he read broadly in the history of architecture, with a special emphasis on early American building. Combining his scholarship in history with his architectural training, Russell became involved in historic preservation projects.

Arriving in Washington, DC in 1980, he undertook the restoration of the 1787 Halcyon House with a former colleague from Harvard. Then he worked as Associate Partner at the firm of Dewberry & Davis where his principal responsibility was the reconstruction of the Filene Center for the Performing Arts at Wolf Trap Farm Park (destroyed by a fire in 1981). Finally, in 1985 with partner David Neumann, he founded his present firm of architects.

Versaci Neumann & Partners quickly found a fertile niche as architects for new historically inspired houses. In twenty years of practice, the firm has received wide

recognition for a diverse range of design commissions that include large country and suburban estates; small cottages and country houses; restorations of older houses in urban and rural settings; and significant additions to period homes. Today, with offices in Washington, DC, and Middleburg, Virginia, the firm maintains an ardent commitment to the artistry and craftsmanship of traditional building.

Lamenting the current state of new home development, Versaci became inspired in 1998 by a new challenge: to find ways to make good design accessible to homeowners unable to afford full architectural services. To that end he released the *Simple Farmhouse Portfolio*, a collection of detail-rich plans for a dozen small houses in traditional styles.

Continuing on his mission to popularize good design, Versaci wrote his debut book on architecture, *Creating a New Old House*, published by the Taunton Press and the American Institute of Architects (2003). In this book Versaci outlines his “Pillars of Traditional Design,” a set of principles for architects and homeowners to use to create new, authentic traditional architecture. As examples, he profiles the residential work of 18 architects across the country who are designing new old houses that are timeless classics.

Creating a New Old House was released to popular and critical acclaim, and it is used in many architectural practices today as a tool for new traditional projects. The New Old House concept quickly developed a popular following, and in 2004 Restore Media asked Versaci to provide concept direction for a new magazine based on his principles. In fall 2004 Old-House Journal’s *New Old House* magazine was launched; Versaci serves as Editor-at-Large and contributes the lead editorial to each issue.

With a full schedule of national appearances, Versaci continues to serve as an advocate for making good design affordable, urging his colleagues to join him in finding creative ways to stem the tide of poor design in new home construction and make real changes in the built environment.