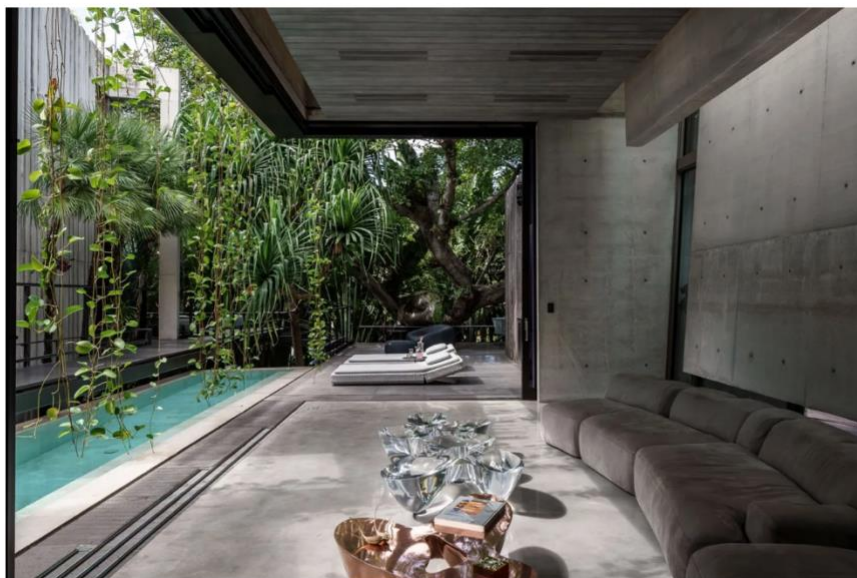


Not The Little House on The Prairie, Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine. michaelstavaridis

*Not The Little House on The Prairie* is the title of the volume by Arquine that illustrates the design genesis of one of Florida's architectural icons.

### Miami Beach, a book tells the story of the Prairie Residence, a masterpiece by Rene Gonzalez

There are projects destined to revolutionize the very way of conceiving a living space, ideas that become reality and that are simultaneously capable of modifying and enriching the natural environment in which they are placed. This is the case of **Prairie Avenue Residence**, an award - winning residence built in **Miami Beach** by **Rene Gonzalez**, one of **Florida**'s best - known architects. To this house, which saw the light in 2018, **Arquine** dedicates an interesting monograph, *Not The Little House on The Prairie* (115 pages, color images, edition in Spanish and English, € 27.68) enriched by texts by **Charles Renfro** and **Cecilia Hernandez Nichols**.



Not The Little House on The Prairie, Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine. michaelstavaridis

## A challenge to climate change

In reality, Prairie Avenue Residence was born from a challenge (won) against climate change and the rise in sea levels. And, as Cecilia Hernández Nichols points out, «if Prairie Avenue House is an intelligent response to environmental climatic conditions, it is not because the architecture is the result of a technical and quantitative analysis.



Not The Little House on The Prairie , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine. michael stavaridis

The project is Rene's intuitive response that creates a sort of biomimicry that he considers natural». Prairie Residence was one of the first houses in the country whose design responded directly to rising sea levels and gave way to a series of private elevated homes, focusing attention on a design point of view that summarizes one of the of contemporary architecture.

## Between past and future

The residence is raised above the ground and reaches towards the sky. It is conceived as a series of separate pavilions made up of floating floors. Like the **mangrove** forests that protect coastal areas from erosion, storm surges and hurricanes, the house rests lightly on the ground and provides a safe haven during storms and floods.



Not The Little House on The Prairie , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.

A construction method similar to that of the **Seminole** natives , who at the beginning of the 1800s used similar tricks to raise their **Chickee** huts and protect themselves from humidity, as well as thus allowing for better ventilation. Later, in the 1930s and 1940s, a housing development named **Stiltville** was built on **Biscayne** Bay in Miami. **Prairie Avenue** embodies the qualities of its location and embodies all previous experiences.

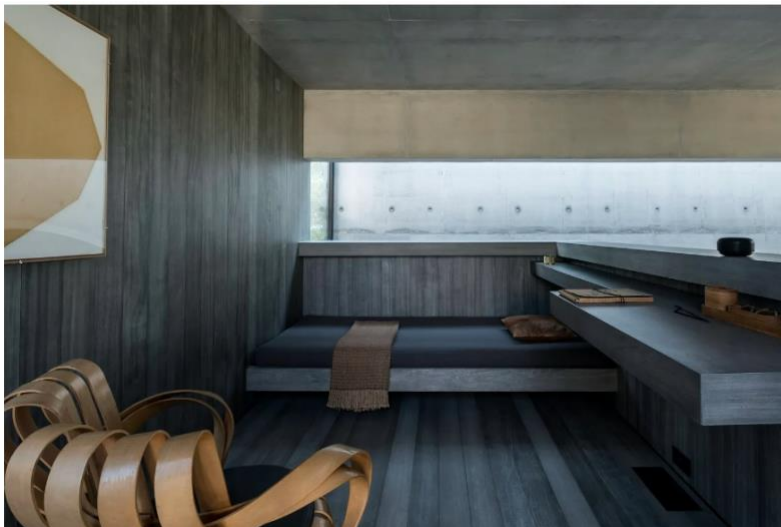
### **A sculptural garden, a scenographic swimming pool**

The living spaces open onto a sculptural garden accessed via a retractable steel staircase that lifts up when not in use. At the top of this staircase, we find a swimming pool which serves as the center of gravity for the four floating pavilions: the living/dining/kitchen area, the master bedroom suite and the two guest cottages.



*Not The Little House on The Prairie* , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine. [michaelstavaridis](#)

These pavilions are accessed via a metal walkway which further emphasizes the relationship between the interior and the surrounding nature. The concrete walls seem to float thanks to the large windows on all sides.



*Not The Little House on The Prairie* , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.

## Between modernism and contemporaneity

The intervention by Charles Renfro, who compares the Prairie with other famous houses of American modernism, is illuminating for understanding the world of Gonzalez's design. For Renfro, this part of architectural history can be read in parallel with «the houses designed for Fire Island's emerging gay communities which, during the 1960s, embraced some of the fundamental tenets of modernism: simple forms and local materials, as well as sliding glass openings that blend inside and outside».



Not The Little House on The Prairie, Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine. michaelstavaridis

The considerations on materials are also interesting: «The concrete, steel, glass and wood of the Prairie are rendered in warm and inviting shades that reflect the colored glow of the structure» specifies Renfro. «The concrete, suspended dangerously in the void, is smooth and burnished. The elegant wooden boiserie, the ceilings and slats, also in wood, create a relief effect on the external walls. These are not the materials of industrial, commercial modernism».



Not The Little House on The Prairie, Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine. michaelstavaridis

## A synthesis between history, nature and experimentation

The work of Rene Gonzalez, who considers architecture a sensory experience, is enhanced by the pages of this book and by the splendid illustrations by Michael Stavaridis. And his work, which is based on the notion that buildings have a profound impact and should be designed to leave positive and lasting impressions, also benefits from an interdisciplinary approach that combines architecture, interior architecture and landscape design. A point of view that Prairie Avenue Residence communicates perfectly, in a perfect synthesis between history, nature and experimentation.



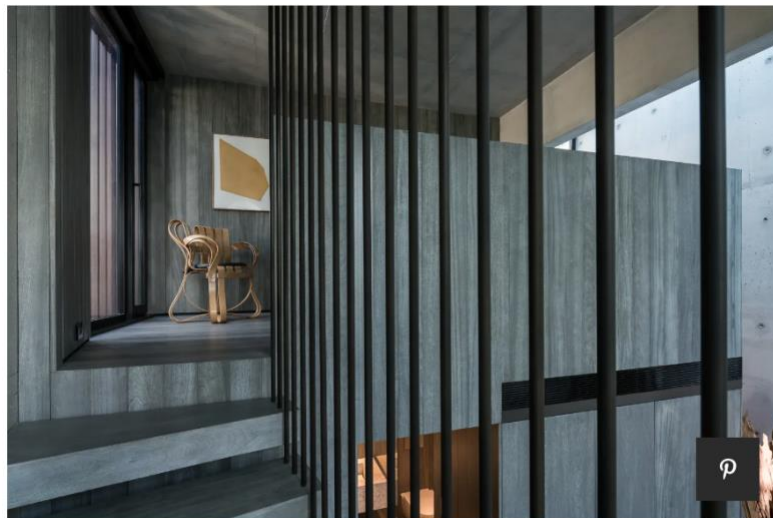
Not The Little House on The Prairie , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine. michael staveridis



1/6



Not The Little House on The Prairie , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.



michaelstavaridis

2/6



Not The Little House on The Prairie , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.



michaelstavaridis

3/6



*Not The Little House on The Prairie* , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.



michael stareridis

4/6



*Not The Little House on The Prairie* , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.



michael stareridis

5/6



*Not The Little House on The Prairie* , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.



michaelstavaridis

6/6



*Not The Little House on The Prairie* , Arquine. Photo Michael Stavaridis, courtesy Arquine.