

THE DOWN EAST DILETTANTE ~ Tales & Strong Opinions, From Maine, Regarding Architecture, Art, Books, Design, & Landscape

>AND THE WINNER IS:

29 Saturday Jan 2011

POSTED BY DOWNEASTDILETTANTE IN ARCHITECTURE, ART, GARDENS, MOGENS TVEDE

≈ 19 COMMENTS

>

It was all rather fun, and thanks to all of you for your great and witty answers to yesterday's quiz—we'll have to play again sometime. Congratulations, commenter ChipSF, for perseverance and stellar detective work in tracking down the correct answers. A special nod to Anonymous, who said the thread was 'isms'—narcissism, imperialism, and socialism.

But indeed, Mogens Tvede was the thread that tied the three pictures together. Here's as much of the story I could piece together without a visit to the library:





The gardens of the Chateau de Brantes in Avignon, a late design by Mogens Tvede, for his cousin. Long before Lee Radziwill, there was another famous Princess Radziwill, Dolly (1886-1966). She was a patron and friend of artists, writers, and designers from Cocteau to Berard to Dior, and a major figure in International Society in the first half of the 20th century. The portrait below, by Alex-Ceslas Rzewuski gives a hint of her stylish charms.



Prince Radziwill died in 1920, and the Princess soon remarried, to the Danish architect and painter, Mogens Tvede (1897-1977). They lived by all accounts in splendor in a large town house near Les Invalides in Paris., where their circle of friends included Nancy Mitford, whose portrait was painted by Tvede.



Although I am unable to find a great deal of information, it appears that the Tvedes were friends of the Standard Oil magnate Walter Brewster Jennings. 1927 found them as the house guests of the Jennings at their Villa Ospo on once fashionable Jekyll Island off the Georgia coast. As a result of that visit, Tvede was commissioned the next year to design a house there for Frank Gould, the Villa Marianna (below).



By 1930, Tvede was associated with society architect Mott Schmidt, a designer of cool, restrained and very traditional Georgian houses. Although Schmidt loyalists protest loudly at the idea, one presumes this was a marriage of convenience, it being unlikely that Tvede had a license to practice in New York. That year they designed a house at Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island for Oliver Jennings, son of Walter Jennings. It is likely, given Tvede's friendship with the Jennings family, that Tvede was the lead designer on the project. It is certainly unlike anything else Schmidt designed, a house in the modern Scandinavian neo-classical style, bold and radical, the very antithesis of Schmidt's usual work.



After traveling down a nearly mile long drive, one drove through a central arch in the garage building facing the main house across the gravel court



The entrance front of the house reminds one of the work of Emilio Terry



A two story entrance rotunda led to the drawing room



The double height drawing room was a masterpiece of modern neo-classicism.



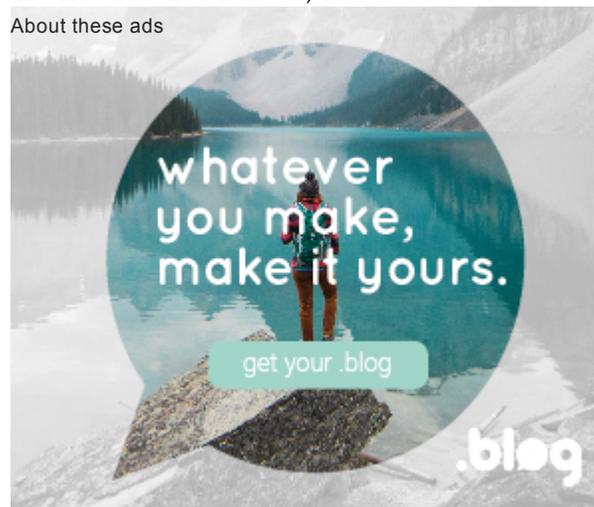
The water front of the Dark Hollow

A holy grail for this post was to find a picture of the elegant octagonal pavilion at water's edge on this estate, but it eluded me—I thought I had saved one from a real estate ad last year, but no can find. And, just for discussion's sake, here is a photo of Dunwalke Farm, the Douglas Dillon house in New Jersey, designed by Mott Schmidt in 1936, and extremely typical of his work. I rest my case.



Photographs of Dark Hollow, photographer uncredited, from a 1933 issue of *House & Garden*.
Photograph of Dunwalke Farm from *Mott B. Schmidt, Architect*.

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About downeastdilettante

A Down East Dilettante---an antiques dealer, a bit ADD, whose enthusiasms jump around architecture, design, landscape, style, history, arts, and more. Occasionally amusing, more often amused.

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thoughts on “>AND THE WINNER IS:”

said: [Hels](#)

[January 29, 2011 at 9:16 pm](#)

>The double height drawing room was indeed a masterpiece of modern neo-classicism. As was the lack of clutter on the walls and in the centre of the room. The natural light flooded in.

REPLY

sa²:[Anonymous](#)

January 29, 2011 at 10:08 pm

>....and a good case it was. You had me hooked....Dark Hollow appears to be anything but...

REPLY

sa³:[Daniel-Halifax](#)

January 29, 2011 at 10:28 pm

>I survived my ambien stupor!! So worth it! Such a great post, I love the portrait of Dolly and Tvede's neo-classical design (of course). I can't wait for more!

REPLY

sa⁴:[Paul Gervais de Bédée](#)

January 30, 2011 at 5:33 am

>Once again the master of fascinating research, those designs are so timely wearing their age rather well.

REPLY

sa⁵:[Anonymous](#)

January 30, 2011 at 8:56 am

>I was so frustrated not being able to solve the riddle, so I resorted to humor-you're a great sport!Thank you for clueing us into this fab neo curiosity! Its seems so few houses of this chilly style survive in the US, or maybe there were so very few? The combination of the facade of the house and garage that make up the entrance court is perfection — would love to see this in person. One has to wonder how the decoration of the main room developed over the years, and just how highly stylized all the other rooms were. Was it only used a summer house?It reminds me of another imperial inspiration – Adler's swedish modern copy of Charlottenhof for the Clow's.

REPLY

sa⁶:[Flo](#)

January 30, 2011 at 9:01 am

>"Once again the master of fascinating research.."And my nominee for the I'd read the phonebook if he wrote it Hall of Fame.

REPLY

sa^{7d}:The Devoted Classicist

January 30, 2011 at 10:30 am

>I cannot begin to tell you how much I have enjoyed seeing these images of the Oliver Jennings house! The Baltic neoclassicism is sublime. While I am an admirer of the work of Mott Schmidt who sometimes did a stark neo-regency house as I recall, I see perhaps only the slightest hint of his influence here and agree with your attribution. Many thanks for the thought provoking post!

REPLY

sa^{8d}:The Down East Dilettante

January 30, 2011 at 10:50 am

>Thank you all. Anonymous, although places like LA and Palm Beach or even Atlanta are full of Vogue Regency/neoclassical houses, I cannot think of another with quite the punch of that entrance courtyard. Regarding more recent pictures: It drives me mad—a couple of years ago, Dark Hollow was for sale, and I thought I had saved pictures from the real estate listing, but I can't find them in any file. there are some pictures of 20 or so years ago in Monica Randall's 'Mansions of Long Island's Gold Coast'.Flo, most appropriate, as my mind is rather like a phone book...

REPLY

sa^{9d}:Toby Worthington

January 30, 2011 at 2:30 pm

>Gosh, that was a connective thread post that readlike degrees of separation. Didn't Tvede paint another picture for Nancy Mitford, of her friend Gaston Palewski, which Nancy ruthlessly trimmed to fit into a picture frame?It's all spinning round in my brain at this point...need to lie down.

REPLY

sa^{10d}:ChipSF

January 30, 2011 at 3:17 pm

>Hooray, sometimes a guess pays off! Thanks to Toby Worthington for the Nancy Miford lead including the artist. However, I was then sidetracked since I thought it was going to be a Mitford thread. The house even looked a little like the entrance facade of the Temple de la Gloire, Lady Moseley's home, but the proportions were off. I finally thought of Dark Hollow, a not very well known house that has intrigued me for awhile. Your pictures are the best I have ever seen of it. There is a good picture of the octagonal garden pavilion in Monica Randall's book also.Thanks for the fun on a wet, cold winter weekend.

REPLY

sa^{11d}:Ryan

January 30, 2011 at 3:21 pm

>Thanks so much for posting this. I've been curious about Dark Hollow ever since I read about it in that Monica Randall book, but I'd never seen the exterior at all until today. Pictures are very scarce on the net. And until today I never knew that Mogen Tvede was an architect, either. I only knew him as a painter and garden designer. Although I can't say I'm a Mott Schmidt expert or purist, I do have the Mark Hewitt book about him. It seems that this blogger is not a particularly big fan of Mr. Schmidt's work? I've been impressed by most of what I've seen, especially his designs for country houses. But I have to admit that I never would have guessed Dark Hollow was one of his designs. Its details may have some small similarity to his apartment buildings in the city, and there may be some other design aspects that were influenced by him, but it doesn't generally resemble any of his other country houses – none that I know of at least. Then again, I know absolutely nothing of Tvede's architectural design work. Schmidt seems to have done good work while collaborating with other architects, though, and so it'd be interesting to know just how much of this home's actual design was Tvede's versus how much input came from Schmidt. As I mentioned, I hadn't realized that Tvede ever designed buildings at all, but a quick google search just now indicated that he may have collaborated with Schmidt on as many as three houses; this home, one called "Elyston" and an unnamed third house. Does anyone happen to know anything more about his residential architectural work? There doesn't appear to be much info floating around out there.

REPLY

~~said:~~ The Down East Dilettante

January 30, 2011 at 4:50 pm

>Ah Toby, be very glad I didn't pursue each and every thread to its illogical and dizzying end, as well I might have :-)) Devoted, Chip, Ryan—I was in a giant antiques mall/used bookstore up here called the Big Chicken Barn (a former giant henhouse), and idly flipping through some vintage copies of House & Garden (most of which I had actually sold them years ago), I came across this one, which I'd never seen. I nearly flipped when I saw the Dark Hollow spread, and knew immediately that I had to post it, so I plopped down my \$5.00, brought it home, and the rest is history. I wish I'd taken the time to photograph the pictures instead of scanning—lots of dots polka dots, and to reduce them I lost a little clarity—but aren't they marvelous? Ryan, I think Schmidt was a very good architect, but of the various traditionalists practicing in his day, I find him the least inventive in all ways—an opinion that constantly gets me in trouble with his hardest core fans. Beautiful houses, gracious, elegant, beautifully detailed, but look at his contemporary Bradley Delehanty, or his immediate predecessors Delano and Aldrich or David Adler, and he comes out the least interesting of the bunch. Which doesn't mean I don't think he designed handsome buildings, for he did.

REPLY

~~said:~~ Topaz

January 31, 2011 at 12:08 am

>But...but...that's all? I know I'm going to sound exceedingly greedy, but I am dying to see more of that beautiful home. If I were on the East Coast, I'd drive over to take more photos. And once I got out of jail for trespassing, I'd be curious to find out what Princess Lee Radziwill thought of Princess Dolly Radziwill, and vice versa. I think the phrase "no love lost" might factor in. Thanks for a fascinating post.

REPLY

~~s14:~~ ArchitectDesign™

January 31, 2011 at 11:31 am

>You continue to astound with your knowledge and sleuthing skills! If you ever find the photo of the pavilion please be sure to post it! I just LOVE the modern neo-classicist movement from the 20-40s, I can't get enough. This house is magnificent. Since you saw a recent real estate brochure -has it changed much?

REPLY

~~s15:~~ The Down East Dilettante

January 31, 2011 at 11:38 am

>No, they seemed to have respected it—a woman with the unlikely name of Ivory Tower owned it for a number of years. Of course now, one has to worry. If one looks it up on Bing maps, there is a strangely placed swimming pool.

REPLY

~~s16:~~ Topaz

January 31, 2011 at 1:49 pm

>I don't suppose there's a floor plan anywhere, is there? I'm fascinated by this house.

REPLY

~~s17:~~ dovecote Decor

January 31, 2011 at 6:54 pm

>That was really hard!! Anonymous was funny, but so wrong about Nancy, she was not the socialist/fascist in the family. I'm patting myself on the back as I read comments. I knew the house is a cross between Regency and Georgian. I was trying to think about how Georgian could be cool, but your photos told the story. I love it when people with money have taste!! Best, Liz

REPLY

~~s18:~~ Design Elements

February 1, 2011 at 2:28 pm

>thanks for posting this!

REPLY

~~s19:~~ Anonymous

January 21, 2012 at 2:38 pm

Sadly, this house has been recently demolished to make way for...who knows what?

REPLY

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