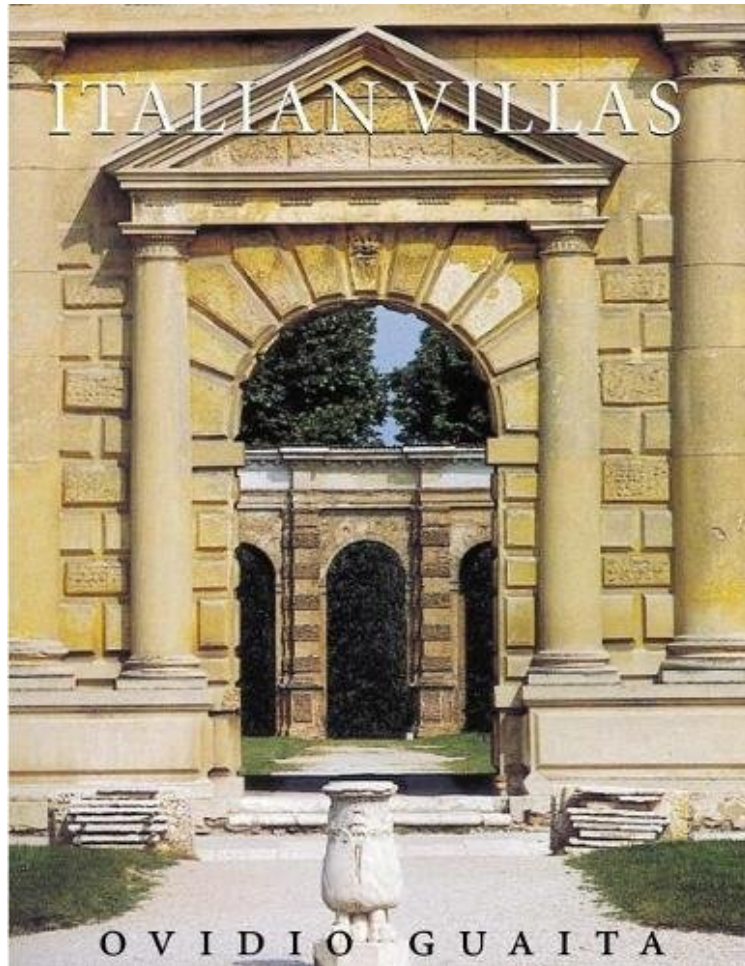


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Roman in origin, the villa evolved from serving as a rural and farming center to a stately country residence. Over time the villa's agricultural function became secondary to a new ideal--a place for intellectual leisure and healthy country living. As a result, the new dwelling had to reflect a cultivated design as did its landscaping. Villas were no longer the work of unskilled laborers but of gifted architects, the best known of which is Andrea Palladio, whose style remains influential today. In this fascinating volume, the author describes and illustrates 250 of the most remarkable villas from the 600-year-old tradition, some well-known houses, others generally overlooked. Presented here are panoramas and details of grand country villas and magnificent suburban estates, each with its own charm and history, and each of which contributes to a style that is still imitated in our century. The illustrations and text by Ovidio Guaita, representing decades of work, are grouped by region, north to south. Enriching the coverage, each chapter includes a profile of a personality--architect, builder, artist, or patron--whose work had a lasting influence on the culture of the villa. Supplementing the color photographs of exteriors and interiors are architectural drawings of houses and maps. The appendices offer a glossary, a bibliography, and a listing of villas that may be visited. This splendid book should be of great appeal to those interested in architecture, art history, and travel.

About the AuthorOvidio Guaita is an architect, photographer, and journalist. He is affiliated with the University of Florence's School of Architecture and writes for Ville Giardini magazine. He has published some 20 books of photographs, including Great Houses around the World and Terrestrial Paradise.