

MASTERING THE TRADE



DOREVE NICHOLAEFF
Architect + Founder
Doreve Nicholaeff Architecture

CCH: *When did you first envision architecture as a career?*

DN: At a young age not only was I intrigued by shapes, forms and geometry but was also fascinated by nature and biology. My career path was set in motion to study biochemistry, however at the age of seventeen I decided that I wanted to explore the built environment. I was fascinated that spaces could evoke different emotions.

CCH: *How does the eye of an artist inform your design work?*

DN: Art, design, and architecture are all informed by a creative spirit. A built structure on a piece of land is not unlike studying a painting on a canvas. Understanding formal relationships, whether it's a line, a plane, or positive or negative spaces, are all part of the design process.

CCH: *What have you learned about building wonderful relationships with your clients and your building partners?*

DN: Much of what I love to do is lead a client on a journey when building a new home or renovating an existing one. Relationships are built on trust and respect. The involvement of our clients and our building partners allows for a strong collaboration for all aspects of the project. Everyone on the team brings their expertise to the discussion and this allows us to push each other to think about solutions in a different way.

CCH: *How do you know you are moving down a path of success with a client?*

DN: When I sense an excitement from the client it spurs us on to develop the design. It is our job to continue to garner this energy throughout the process and work toward ongoing joy.

CCH: *How do you counsel your younger associates?*

DN: The team is always involved in the process of design from inception. Visiting job sites together promotes an understanding of construction. Seeing a building in the context of the landscape teaches the associate to think about how the building meets or hovers above the land. Following the exterior and interior details along the way and their resolution from paper to the field is so educational.

CCH: *How do you and your team approach each project as a unique space for that client while accommodating evolving needs that may become important over time?*

DN: We try to design homes as multi-generational family assets, so the house works well regardless of the owner's stage of life, raising a family through to retirement and beyond. Many of our clients prefer first floor suites, or built-in elevators that make every floor level accessible. Other features like wider hallways and roll-in showers improve the quality of life for those with mobility issues later in life. We pride ourselves on designing spaces that maximize natural light

and take full advantage of the available views, so that everyone, including guests, experience the best the home has to offer, be it calm solitude or in the thick of family activities.

CCH: *What are the hardest things about running an architecture business?*

DN: Architecture is a multifaceted process and running a business in this field requires creativity, innovation, the latest in building technology and strong communication skills. As a smaller boutique design firm, I am involved with all aspects of the business.

CCH: *What was the best advice given to you in your career?*

DN: Early in my architectural studies I learned to observe, study, understand, and experience my surroundings. Being curious and receptive to all cultures enriches our experience and knowledge and becomes the memory bank from which we draw. Most importantly we learned to always listen to the client.

CCH: *What would you offer to someone making their way into the field of architecture and design?*

DN: Someone beginning their journey into architecture should have an innate love for the environment and design and be open to new ideas. They should be willing to work hard, be tenacious and always be willing to creatively rework solutions.

CCH: *What are the most rewarding things about your business?*

DN: The most rewarding part of the business is seeing a project come to life and making our clients' dreams come true. 🏡

To see examples of Doreve Nicholaeff's inspired work visit nicholaeff.com