



BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, PALACIO BOSCH

The residence of the U.S. Ambassador to Argentina was designed by French architect René Sergent for Ernesto Bosch and his wife Elisa de Alvear. It was built between 1912 and 1917 upon Bosch's return from representing his country in Germany, the United States, and France to become Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs. André Carlhian, a specialist in traditional French classicism, was responsible for the interiors. Achille Duchêne designed the garden with its sophisticated geometry. Lanús y Hary oversaw the construction, since the architect never visited Argentina. The materials and furnishings all came from France.

Because of its stylistic unity and contextual relation to its environs, the Palacio Bosch is considered Sergent's finest work. The façade echoes the small temple opposite in Palermo Park. Grandiloquent interior rooms, around a central stone staircase, overlook the garden. The building was seminal to Argentine architectural taste. Working again with Duchêne, Sergent designed the Palacio Errázuriz (now the Museum of Decorative Arts) and the Palacio Sans Souci in Buenos Aires.

Bosch sold the residence to the United States Government in 1929 following recurrent propositions by U.S. Ambassador Robert Woods Bliss. Bliss, owner of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., also purchased some of the furnishings, which he later donated to the residence. Major renovation of the building was undertaken in 1994. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' first totally historic restoration thus began, using many Argentine artisans and craftsmen who were direct descendents of the original experts. Thanks to the extraordinary donation of the research of Argentine architect Fabio Grementieri and Robert Carlhian of Paris—André Carlhian's son—an exact restoration was possible.

The effort was an international one, with invaluable contributions from dedicated professionals in France, the United States, and Argentina. Leading experts on historic preservation from thirty countries, who attended the International Conference on Critical Appraisal and Heritage Preservation in Buenos Aires in 2000, were unanimous in their praise for the renovation and restoration of the Bosch Palace. Copies of Sergent's original drawings (now owned by Grementieri) were published in *Revista de Arquitectura*, Argentina's primary architectural magazine of the period. The Palacio Bosch is designated an historic property by the Buenos Aires municipality and the Argentine Republic.