

One Man's Quest to Photograph Every Frank Lloyd Wright Structure Ever Built

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Chris Malloy



There are 532 [Frank Lloyd Wright](#) structures standing in the world. Phoenix-based photographer Andrew Pielage is on a mission to shoot every one of them. The 39-year-old is the unofficial photographer of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. So far, he has shot about 50 Wright structures. His quest to shoot Wright's oeuvre began in 2011, when he first toured [Taliesin West](#), Wright's former winter home and studio outside Phoenix. Photography wasn't allowed on that tour. But later a friend connected Pielage with the folks at Taliesin West, and for them [Pielage](#) shot the sprawling stone-and-wood compound. The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation loved his work, and he became its unofficial photographer.

Since then, Pielage has shot Wright's Hollyhock House (Los Angeles), Unity Temple (Illinois), Taliesin (Wisconsin), and Fallingwater (Pennsylvania), where he did a three-week residence. "When you have that much time to shoot a property, you get to know the ins and outs," he says. What impressed him was how, against the grain of the bright shots one typically sees of the house, Fallingwater, on cloudy days, "turns gray so that the building's personality changes with the environment."

The spirit of Wright's organic style, of structures inspired by and seamlessly integrated into the natural world, whether desert or city or forest, has challenged Pielage. How can one properly capture this architectural titan's work? Pielage has developed tricks.

For one, he started taking vertical panoramas. He would start with his lens to the floor, then shift up toward the ceiling, capturing the ceiling fixtures and chairs Wright loved to design. "This way," he notes, "you get more of Wright in one image." Another trick: Pielage only shoots Wright's interiors in natural light. "His designs are so incorporated into the environment," the photographer says. "He put so much time and thought into how the sun would rise and light up a room that shooting him in artificial light would be cheating his properties."

Some of his favorite Wright properties to shoot, other than Taliesin West and [Fallingwater](#), have been Unity Temple—where "shapes and sizes evoke feeling"—and the David and Gladys Wright House in Phoenix (where, it turns out, Pielage got married).

Pielage, who teaches workshops at Taliesin, Taliesin West, and Fallingwater, still has well over 400 Wright structures to shoot, but he's only a few years into his quest. Lucky for fans of the architect, he seems committed to the lofty goal.

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Marin County Civic Center in San Rafael, California.