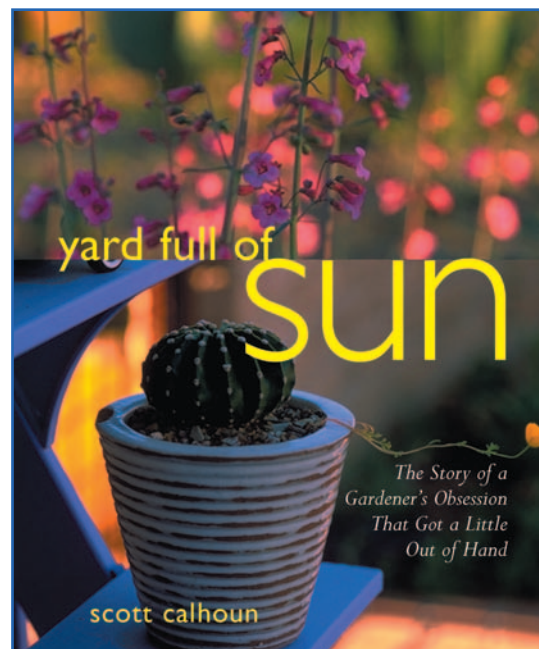
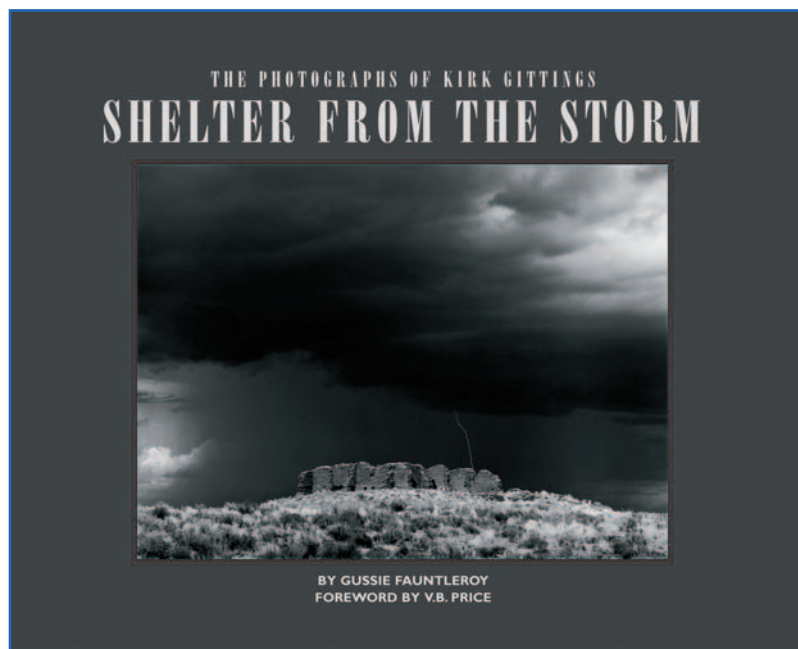


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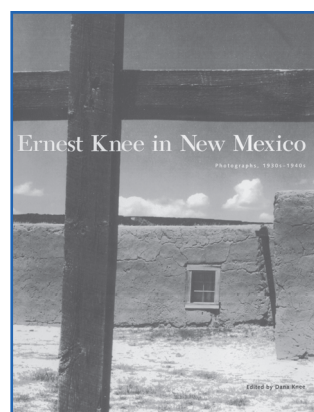
Two **photographic views of New Mexico**, small kitchens, and the ultimate low-desert yard make good summer reading (and viewing).



Shelter from the Storm, Photographs by Kirk Gittings, by Gussie Fauntleroy, foreword by V.B. Price, New Mexico Magazine, Santa Fe, NM, 88 pages plus four-page caption insert, 77 images, hardcover, \$29.95.

Quoted in *Shelter from the Storm* by author Gussie Fauntleroy, photographer Kirk Gittings says, “There’s an implied hope in aesthetic beauty.” As the photos in this book emphatically demonstrate, Gittings is a surpassingly hopeful photographer who finds, creates, amplifies, and even invents beauty in a wide range of subjects. These include the ever-faithful ruins at Chaco Canyon, post-modern houses in Albuquerque, cast-off religious artifacts, churches, rail yards, a hymnal, and various built environments both public and private.

Gittings is one hard-working photographer. His images have graced every issue of *Su Casa* since I became editor nearly five years ago. For the past 25 years he’s been on the very short A-list of photographers who shoot for the leading New Mexico architects, builders, designers, and magazine editors. Any given day, odds are good that Gittings is standing behind his tripod-



mounted view camera, open-top Starbucks cup in hand, waiting for a cloud to pass or counting seconds on an exposure of, say, the new Mini dealership, a tranquil adobe hacienda, or a crumbled Anasazi ruin. It’s all in a day’s work. Working a shoot with Gittings, though, I get the impression that he’s not so much on the job as expressing his being in its native mode: perceiving beauty.

Maybe that’s why *Shelter from the Storm* (Bob Dylan, anyone?) makes no distinction between images Gittings shot for hire and those he took for himself. Rather, they are all concerned with the interface between humanity

and the world as mediated by, most often, a building or structure of some kind, inside or out. The shot selection makes no judgments: beauty speaks for itself. Distinctions between art and commercial work can seem precious and pompous against a book like this, which instead dares the reader/viewer to accept the images at face value. Draw your own conclusions.

Gittings selected and organized the photos in *Shelter from the Storm* to represent 30 years of a career yet far from finished. The photos express a compelling inevitability, as if objects, structure, light, and even cloudscape arranged themselves for the camera. Yet none of the pictures feels manufactured or staged.

No wonder builders and architects love to have Gittings shoot their buildings: they acquire stature, impact, and a surprising emotional resonance through his lens. The great architectural photographers, and New Mexico is blessed with a handful, know how to shoot volume and void as well as mass, line, and color. Sometimes the subject of the photo, and of the architect's design, is not so much the building as the space it defines. That's where

Gittings often finds potential and opportunity.

Some favorites: the brooding anachronistic majesty of Abiquiu morada, Westwork Architects' post-industrial, post-pueblo residence, all the Chaco pictures, the amazingly eerie torn hymnal, the sinuous, upward stretching Disabled American Veterans Vietnam Memorial in Eagle Nest, and Cabezon Peak framed through a collapsed doorway of a Chaco outlier northwest of Rio Rancho.

Fauntleroy aptly keeps her written commentary to a minimum. Her elegant but never self-promoting prose stays out of the way and provides context by gently nudging the reader toward a perspective for viewing the images based on Gittings' own words and anecdotes. The foreword by poet, author, and newspaper journalist V. B. Price, himself a long-time collaborator with Gittings, is a mini-masterwork of penetrating verbal economy. Let's hope they collaborate again.

Shelter from the Storm belongs on your bookshelf because it conveys a mode of seeing New Mexico that responds deeply to the spirit of place, not just through landscape but

through centuries of human interpretation of it. Here is a place that throws you back on yourself in stark introspection, if you let it. *Shelter from the Storm* helps you emerge from that encounter with fresh insight into the world and, just maybe, your place in it.

—Charles C. Poling

Ernest Knee in New Mexico, Photographs, 1930s–1940s, edited by Dana Knee, foreword by Robert A. Ewing, introduction by Catherine Williamson, Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, NM, 114 pages, 81 plates, hardcover, \$39.95.

When Ernest Knee arrived in Santa Fe in May 1931, he later recalled, "I suddenly realized I loved the Southwest beyond anything else." In the essay accompanying the photos in this book, Catherine Williamson suggests that Knee "made up his mind to stay, never regretting the life he chose." She continues: "It is easy to imagine the initial attraction Ernie felt for Santa Fe: its sun-warmed, earth-hugging architecture; the landscape of dry hills and green mountains that turn pink, lavender, and gold in the changing light; the invigorating air

