PALM SPRINGS JAMES SCHNEPF MODERN LIVING

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF PALM SPRINGS MODERN LIVING BY JAMES SCHNEPF: A SPECIAL HOME TOUR

Tuesday, February 18, 2025



FOREWORD BY
WILLIAM KRISEL

WILLIAM KRISEL

E. STEWART WILLIAMS

WILLIAM CODY

CHARLES DU BOIS

SAMUEL PASCAL

HOWARD LAPHAM

LANCE O'DONNELL

LIVING BY JAMES SCHNEPF: A SPECIAL HOME TOUR

Thank you all for coming out to this Modernism Week tour celebrating the 10th anniversary of my coffee table book, *Palm Springs Modern Living*. This tour is an especially meaningful one as it marks exactly 10 years to the day that the book was released.

On that day, February 18, 2015, I had the first book signing in the Palm Springs Art Museum Sculpture Garden and I also gave a presentation in the auditorium sharing backstories on how the book came to be and interesting stories on the subjects in the book.

I'm thrilled to celebrate this milestone with all of you and to revisit seven remarkable homes featured in the book. These homes are not just impeccable mid-century gems, but also enduring symbols of Palm Springs rich mid-century design heritage.

As legendary architect William Krisel wrote in the forward to my book, and I quote, Palm Springs Modern Living and one has to be aware of it.

So with that sentiment in mind, keep your eyes and ears wide open while you explore homes created by architects including Charles Du Bois, Lance O'Donnell, E. Stewart Williams, Howard Lapham, William Cody, and of course, William Krisel.

Again, thank you for being part of this journey and I'm excited to share these special homes with you. It's time once again to celebrate the architecture and the people in Palm Springs.

1 1210 LOS ROBLES DRIVE

Architect: Charles Du Bois

Year: 1962

Current Owners: Allan Moore and Brenden Martin

Neighborhood: Vista Las Palmas

Palm Springs Modern Living: Pages 166-173

Located in the Vista Las Palmas neighborhood, the home at 1210 Los Robles Dr. was designed by architect Charles Du Bois in 1962 as part of the Las Palmas Summit Estates community. Originally decorated by designer Michael Buccino, the home reflects the era's love for clean lines and open spaces.

William Stewart, a Palm Springs enthusiast, purchased the property in 2004. "Here, mid-century homes aren't just houses," he says, "they're a way of life." Stewart appreciated the city's car culture, wide boulevards, and the spirit of living young that permeates the desert.

In 2016, Allan Moore and Brenden Martin acquired the property and embarked on a meticulous renovation. They modernized systems while preserving the original design, adding solar panels, a home automation system, and updating bathrooms and the kitchen.

The home, aptly named "Cincuenta Palmas" (Fifty Palms), sits on a spacious corner lot with sweeping mountain views. Upon entering through the striking Tiffany Blue doors, a breezeway connects the indoors and outdoors. The continuous quartz flooring enhances the sense of openness, ideal for desert living and entertaining.

A newly completed casita expands the living space, offering a home office, guest suite, and a seamless blend of modern amenities with vintage-inspired finishes. The outdoor living area features a pool, firepit seating, and a dedicated dog run.

The home has been featured in several prestigious publications, including *Vanity Fair* and *Elle Décor*. Its history even includes a rumored connection to author John Steinbeck, adding to its mystique. "Cincuenta Palmas" remains a testamen













Architect: E. Stewart Williams

Year: 1953

Current Owners: James and Vicky Costakis

Neighborhood: Little Tuscany

Palm Springs Modern Living: Book Jacket Cover Photo and Pages 52-55

The Edris House is a mid-century modern house designed by the pioneer architect E. Stewart Williams in 1953 for William and Marjorie Edris. The house is situated on a rocky outcrop, with the exterior of the house clad in wood.Located in the exclusive neighborhood of Little Tuscany, Palm Springs, the house was commissioned by Marjorie and William Edris. The Edris's were neighbors and friends of Williams.

When the house was built it must have appeared as if a spaceship had landed amongst the red-tiled roofs and white stucco haciendas that dotted the canyon. With its Jetsons roofline, a flying "V" suspended over clerestory windows held up by a massive stone fireplace.

The Edris's could afford to be bold, having made their money in theaters and hotels in the Pacific Northwest. They began vacationing in Palm Springs in the late 1940's, keeping a small apartment in the same complex as Williams and his wife, Mari. When the Edris's decided to build on a view plot up on Chino Canyon, Williams was a natural choice. Angular and imposing from the street, the house is warm and inviting, almost cozy, on the inside, and an organic machine built for pleasure.

In 2000, the property was bought by architect J.R. Roberts, the former managing director of the Palm Springs Art Museum and Design Center, planning commissioner for the City of Palm Springs and VP of the Palm Springs Modern Committee. Roberts befriended Williams in his later years and the architect often recalled spending evenings with his wife and the Edris's playing cards, mixing cocktails and watching the light change on the desert below as the walls of glass seemingly disappeared around them.

Roberts' one-year renovation project in consultation with Williams, shows the painstaking care taken of the original fixtures and wood right down to the last space-age doorknob. The house is exactly as it was in the 50s, incorporating the architect's main idea – to serve as a home first.

In 2016 the house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2018 the house was purchased by its current owners who are honored to enjoy and care for this special home.

Architect: Lance O'Donnell

Year: 2008

Palm Springs, CA 92262

Current Owners: Lyle Kanee and Pamela Chapman

Neighborhood: Little Tuscany

Palm Springs Modern Living: Pages 126-129

Designed and built by award-winning architect Lance O'Donnell for his family in 2008 on a prime one-half acre in the Palm Springs neighborhood known as Little Tuscany, O'Donnell built the house, utilizing the great outdoors as a "timeless, low-tech solution" to the desert's extreme temperatures. This led the house to be one of the first in the US to achieve prestigious LEEDS platinum status. Passive solar heating and cooling minimizes energy costs: the generous overhangs on the south side shade the floor-to-ceiling windows from direct sun in summer and permit the angled winter sun to warm the floors. Concrete slab floors were poured directly on the rock of the hillside, climbing in a series of graduated volumes that hug the site and cool the floors in summer. O'Donnell's architecture also uses cross-ventilation: "by placing operable windows on the north and south sides of the house, the house can be quickly cooled in evenings, thus decreasing the need for air conditioning", said O'Donnell. The house was built to virtually eliminate electrical costs and remain comfortable day and night.

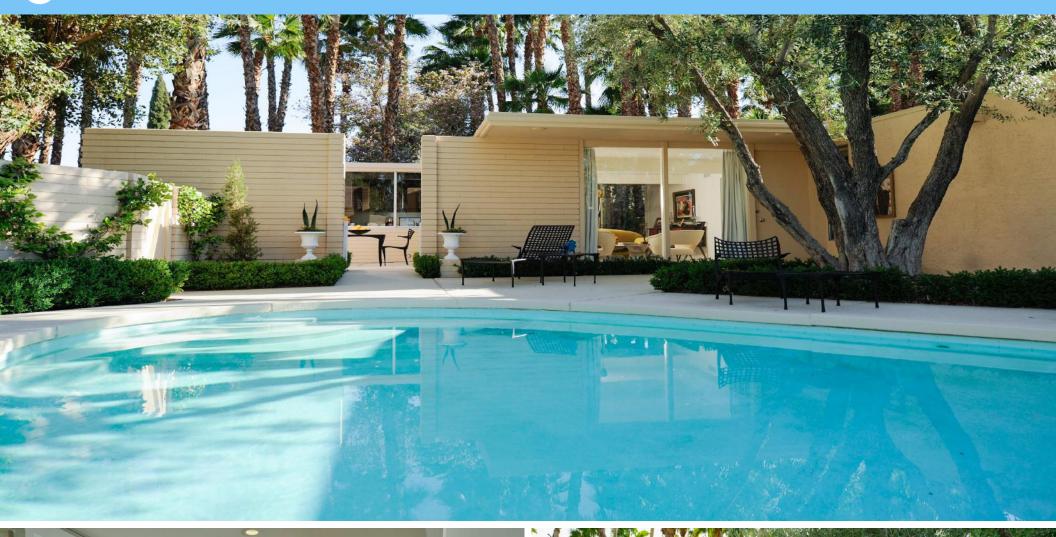
During construction, famed architect and close friend, Don Wexler would often drop in to talk with O'Donnell, crew members and tell stories about his history in Palm Springs. "One of the unique aspects of practicing architecture in a city that values its modern architectural legacy has been my ongoing relationship with Don Wexler. Our relationship transcends time – we share aesthetic values, and we both have an innate desire to solve challenges using modern means", O'Donnell said.

The current owners purchased the house from O'Donnell in 2017 and are deeply committed to the green environmental footprint and architectural features of the house and the lot. They have expanded the xeriscape landscaping to include more desert plants and carefully maintain the forest of local Palo Verde trees that shade the property. Small improvements and ongoing maintenance work are done without changing the materials that were chosen by O'Donnell to reflect the palette and textures of the desert. They have furnished the house with mostly mid-century modern furniture and art, including large pieces that take advantage of the high ceilings and neutral palette of the interiors, and have added paintings, prints, photographs, and sculpture created by local artists. "We feel privileged to be able to live in this very special house, and to preserve the legacy of Lance's design", said Pamela Chapman and Lyle Kanee, Canadians who have come to love the desert and the Little Tuscany neighborhood. "As Lance once said, the house itself feels like a desert creature...nestled in the rocks that were left on the site, absorbing the rays of the sun, reflecting the beauty of the mountain views, and cooled by the winds that rush through north Palm Springs and set the trees swaying. It is a truly magical place."













Architect: William F. Cody

Year: 1959

Current Owner: Joey Seay

Neighborhood: Racquet Club Cottages West Palm Springs Modern Living: Pages 66-71

Nestled beside the iconic Palm Springs Racquet Club, the Racquet Club Cottages West (now Racquet Club Garden Villas) is a stunning collection of 37 modernist condominiums designed by William F. Cody and developed by Paul Trousdale. Built between 1959 and 1960, this complex, with its lush gardens, meandering stream, and community pool, features landscape design by Phil Shipley and Associates. Beautifully restored, it retains its original charm.

Initially envisioned as "maintenance-free 'hotel apartments'" for winter retreats, the cottages were marketed as an extension of the Racquet Club. Cody's design incorporated delicate concrete block screen walls for privacy, and flexible layouts allowed for combined or separate units. During construction, Paul Trousdale and his wife Jean Vick resided in Unit 113, uniquely featuring a private pool at her request.

In 2013, Joe and Kim Zakowski, owners of Unit 113 and founding members of the Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, introduced the "Baby Cody" and the Racquet Club Garden Villas to the museum's Architecture and Design Council. Kim later became HOA president, spearheading efforts to designate the complex as the city's third historic district, which was achieved in 2013.

"Mid-century Modern architecture is about living in harmony with nature," reflects Kim. "Embracing the sunlight, the blue of the pool, the green grass, and the rose-tinted mountains, while enjoying cocktails with friends by a fire at night. We love the people here. The experience is indescribable to an outsider."

In 2020, Joey H. Seay, III purchased Unit 113, renaming it "Bubbles Palm Springs Hide-A-Way" after a large nude portrait, "Bubbles." This painting, deemed obscene by a Nashville judge, had a remarkable history. Joey, after receiving it from his uncle, brought "Bubbles" to Palm Springs, promising a beautiful swimming pool and the inclusion of "Haulin Harlin," a life-size artist's metal replica of a horse.

Joey meticulously restored the pool, tiling it with small, oval white tiles. He also raised the floors and installed terrazzo tiles. Enlisting a renowned Boston interior designer, Joey sourced mid-century furniture in Connecticut, where prices were more affordable.

Today, Joey, Bubbles, and Harlin enjoy their mid-century lifestyle at the Racquet Club Cottages West, grateful for the vibrant Palm Springs community that brings youthful energy and joy to their everyday lives.

Developer: Samuel Pascal

Year: 1956

Current Owners: Lauren LeBaron and Peter Moruzzi

Neighborhood: Tahquitz River Estates

Palm Springs Modern Living: Pages 136-137

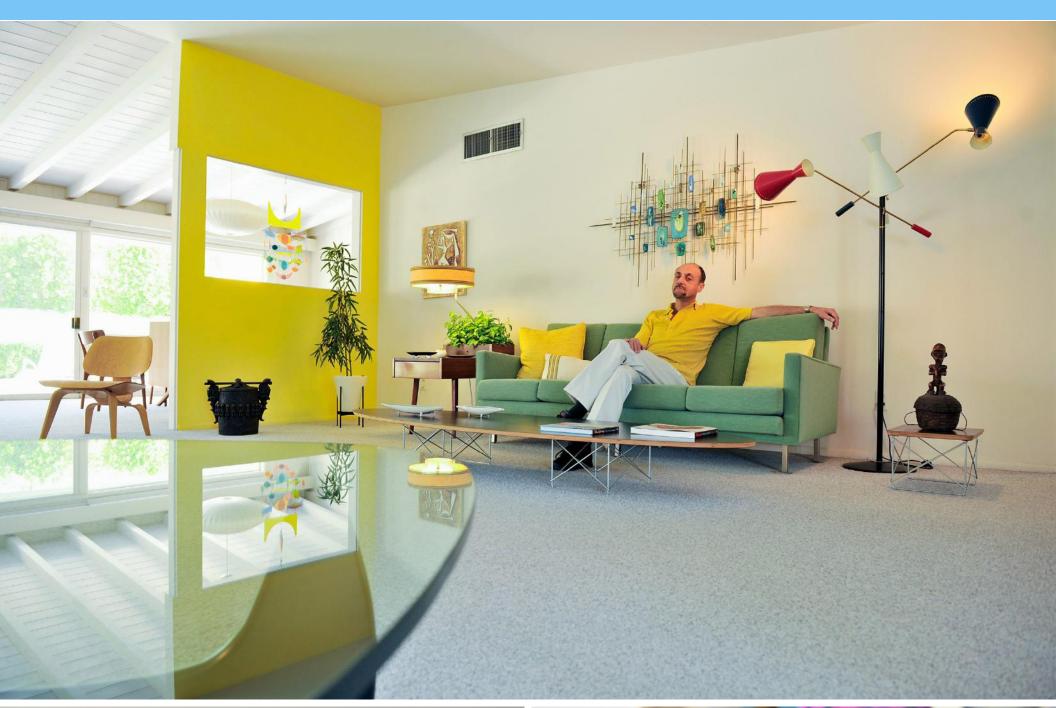
The Palm Springs home of Lauren LeBaron and Peter Moruzzi stands as a testament to the desert's mid-century modern architectural legacy. This 2,600 square-foot residence, a departure from the ubiquitous Trousdale style prevalent in the neighborhood, was designed and built in 1956 by local developer/builder Samuel Pascal for Rabbi Leon Rosenberg of Temple Isaiah.

Characterized by a low-pitched roof, deep eaves, and floor-to-ceiling glass, the house seamlessly blends indoor and outdoor living. A playful touch is the lone palm tree piercing the roofline near the entrance, a whimsical detail reminiscent of the era. This architectural flourish, along with the lush landscaping surrounding the pool – a tranquil oasis flanked by palms, citrus, and olive trees – creates an inviting atmosphere.

Inside, a spacious "great room" – a hallmark of mid-century design – encompasses the living, dining, and bar areas, fostering a sense of openness and connection. Original features abound: the kitchen retains its vintage yellow Western Holly oven, while the bathrooms showcase original tile work, etched glass doors, and color-coordinated fixtures. The birch wood cabinets and drawers, a rarity in homes of this era, further enhance the residence's authenticity.

The home's history is as captivating as its architecture. After Rabbi Rosenberg, the residence became home to renowned artist O.E.L. "Bud" Graves and his wife. Graves, a prominent figure in the Palm Springs art scene, hosted glamorous parties and taught art classes within these walls. In 1960, a pivotal moment occurred: while teaching a class to society matrons in the great room, Graves and his students were captured by the renowned photographer Robert Doisneau for a *Fortune* magazine assignment. These candid images, later featured in Doisneau's acclaimed book, "Palm Springs 1960," offer a glimpse into the vibrant social life that once unfolded within these walls.

Lauren and Peter, the current owners, purchased the house in 1998, drawn to its architectural significance and unique history. They have lovingly restored the property, preserving its mid-century charm while adding modern comforts. This home serves as a captivating reminder of Palm Springs' rich architectural heritage.







6 1611 S CALLE PALO FIERRO UNIT 7







Architect: Howard Lapham

Year: 1956

Current Owners: Richard and Debra Hovel

PS Neighborhood: Deepwell

Palm Springs Modern Living: Pages 198-201

When artists and designers Richard and Debra Hovel traveled to Palm Springs in November 2003 for vacation, they fell in love with Palm Springs. When they returned home to Minneapolis, they immediately put their house on the market. "There's something special about the spirit of this place. Maybe it's because most people here are from somewhere else—we all chose to be here. From the moment we vacationed here, we were smitten. We saw an ad in Dwell Magazine for The Desert Star, a 1956 mid-century condo complex designed by Howard Lapham, and it felt like the ad was placed just for us. We called the sellers, visited Palm Springs the following weekend, and knew right away we couldn't walk away from this perfect little piece of heaven. We bought the unit, and a few years later, we purchased another one. Now, we live here full-time—and we live younger and happier in this house."

The Desert Star, one of Howard Lapham's earliest projects, remains one of his most enduring works. Lapham, known for designing residences in exclusive communities like the Thunderbird Country Club and the iconic Lord Fletcher's restaurant in Rancho Mirage, created this gem as part of a vision commissioned in 1955 by three couples looking to build the ideal resort. The Desert Star consists of seven condo units, six studio apartments of about 600 square feet, and one two-bedroom condo, all arranged around a sparkling pool. The building's canted roofs gently curve toward each other, set against the dramatic backdrop of the rugged mountains, as if posing for the perfect photograph.

In 2016, the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation succeeded in designating Lapham's visionary work as a Class 1 Historic Site. "We tend to attract people looking for a quiet getaway, and many are drawn to Palm Springs because of its architecture," says Hovel. "Most are interested in mid-century design, and they see this place and think it looks cool and unique. It's so much fun for us because we get to share our passion for mid-century architecture, guiding visitors on where to go and what to look for."

After all, Palm Springs' architecture isn't just visually striking—it's immersive. You can step into history and walk in the footsteps of 20th-century icons.

7 992 LA JOLLA DRIVE

Architect: William Krisel

Year: 1957

Current Owner: Leo Spiegel PS Neighborhood: Twin Palms

Palm Springs Modern Living: Page 80-83

In 1957, Twin Palms, designed by William Krisel and built by Alexander Construction, became the first completed Modernist neighborhood in the desert, igniting a movement that continues to shape Palm Springs today.

Chris Menrad, a founding member of the Palm Springs Modern Committee, recalls the early days of the mid-century modern revival. "When I bought my first Alexander house in 1999, there wasn't the same appreciation for mid-century modernism as today," he says. "But I found a community of like-minded individuals. The Palm Springs Modern Committee played a crucial role in preserving this architectural heritage. Living in a modern home changed my perspective; it was about a new generation embracing light-filled spaces and open layouts."

In 2020, Leo Spiegel purchased the home on La Jolla Drive, "I had always dreamed of living in an architecturally significant home," Spiegel says. "What first struck me was the 'body' of the roofline and the geometric landscaping which captivated me. The soaring space creates a formal area for my home, where I can showcase my art and Broyhill Brasilia furniture. My goal was to own a house that met my 21st-century needs, while still honoring the original design". Speigel added a separate, discreet addition to the rear and he incorporated Krisel's "Apricot Glow" paint color.

Today, the home showcases Krisel's signature style: clerestory windows, Terrazzo floors, and a massive stone fireplace. Mountain views frame the living spaces, creating a serene atmosphere. "Striking a balance between the past and the future works best," Spiegel explains. "This is living at mid-century; and this is living today."







TOUR MAP

- Check In Location
 Temple Isaiah
 332 W Alejo Rd
 Old Las Palmas
- Charles Du Bois
 Cincuenta Palmas 50 Palms
 1210 Los Robles Drive
 Vista Las Palmas
 1962
- E. Stewart Williams
 Edris House
 1030 West Cielo Drive
 Little Tuscany
 1962
- D'Donnell House
 2299 W Via Monte Vista
 Little Tuscany
 2009
- William Cody
 "Baby Cody"— The Seay Residence
 360 West Cabrillo Road Unit 113
 Racquet Club Cottages West
 1959
- Samuel Pascal
 LeBaron-Moruzzi Residence
 1056 San Lorenzo Road
 Tahquitz River Estates
 1956
- 6 Howard Lapham
 The Desert Star
 1611 S Calle Palo Fierro Unit 7
 Deepwell
 1956
- William Krisel
 Spiegel House
 992 La Jolla Drive
 Twin Palms
 1957

