Desert Dreams: The Modern Residences of Palm Springs

SAH/SCC Home Tour: Saturday, April 13th

Join the SAH/SCC for Desert Dreams: The Modern Residences of Palm Springs, a rare opportunity to experience Palm Springs' most spectacular modern architecture. The all-day (9:00AM - 7:00PM) bus tour picks up and returns participants to a parking lot in downtown Palm Springs. It features more than eight homes by architects such as Richard Neutra, Albert Frey, John Lautner, William Cody, Stewart Williams, William Pereira, Don Wexler, and others. Don't miss this rare opportunity to visit and discuss the icons of Palm Springs residential architecture from 1930 to 1970.

Spend a day touring Palm Springs in style. From coffee and pastries in the morning, to catered lunch, delicious and appropriate getaways.

Tour participants will also visit the Grace Lewis Miller Residence (1961-62) by Donald Wexler, AIA, for the George Alexander Construction Company, Wexler's attempt to adapt a system of prefabricated steel components to residential design resulting in a building system whereby the kitchens and baths were pre-built and the rooms were trucked in and attached to this core. According to former SAH/SCC President Ted Wells, Wexler's work "displays a rigor, clarity, and seriousness that is often missing in resort architecture. It is tailored and direct and displays the discipline of someone who understands what modernism is about. For Wexler it wasn't about style, it was about construction, economics, and living; his houses today are lasting examples of that short period when Modernism was taken seriously, practiced with meaning by designers who truly cared about, and believed they could improve, people's lives through good design."

Other homes featured on the tour include the lesser known but no less remarkable Firestone Residence by William Pereira Company, the extraordinary Rubenstein Residence by William F. Cody, and the legendary Sinatra Residence (1947) by E. Stewart Williams.

Four participants will also visit the Elrod Residence by John Lautner (1968). Described by Gebhard and Winter as "Lautner at his best," this circular, concrete spaceship with a motorized glass wall creates an architectural space few visitors ever forget. The Elrod Residence was also immortalized in "Diamonds are Forever" as the playground for Bambi and Thumper.

Seating on the motor coach is limited. Only the first 50 participants will be accommodated. Tickets are $150 for SAH/SCC members; $175 for non-members. The fee includes a light breakfast, catered lunch, cocktails, and hors d'oeuvres. Send in the order form on the back page early to avoid disappointment.

For those members who will be interested in staying overnight in Palm Springs, a number of mid-century lodging alternatives include the Orbit Inn, Ballantine's Motel, Miracle Manor, and other appropriate getaways.
President's Letter

In our January newsletter I promised more information on the tragic destruction last year of two significant modern houses by R.M. Schindler, the Packard House in San Marino and the Wolfe House in Avalon on Catalina Island. Sadly, there is nothing new to report, as the shocking public apathy about this matter continues.

As an institution, the Los Angeles Times is naturally in the strongest position to lead an ex post facto review of these scandals and to provide a forum for a larger public debate about preservation policies. The Times' architecture critic, Nicolaus Oreskous, has been a frequent champion of the city's modern architectural heritage, and he certainly possesses an informed and sensitive view of Schindler's importance. Incapably, the demolition of these two houses has still not been reported in our newspaper of record.

One would expect that the Times would not report these occurrences, but also make some attempt to examine the larger issues of institutional responsibility. Who destroyed these houses and why? Who, in government, approved their destruction? Most important, what can be done to prevent similar losses in the future? To the editors of the Times: the community needs your leadership on this matter.

Likewise, the Los Angeles Conservancy is well-positioned because of its resources to investigate and publicize these scandals. Yet they have been curiously restrained. I'm told that the Conservancy learned of the Wolfe House's demolition shortly after it occurred late last summer. I'm told that they responded by sending letters to neighbors of other Schindler houses—not to inform them of the outrage, but simply to make them aware of the historic building in their neighborhood.

While this is certainly a positive action, it seems to be a remarkably timid gesture for an organization with such a great reputation for activism and influence. Why is the Conservancy nervously dipping its toes in the water about Schindler, when it is not at all afraid to make a splash over the drive-in theater in Azusa or the Ambassador Hotel, buildings of marginal significance to architectural history? The Packard House and the Wolfe House are gone, and the point is not to wish them back by romance or nostalgia. Nor is the point to merely launch criticism at institutions like the Times and the Conservancy, with which, on the whole, serve the public well. Rather, the objective now is to bring the truth to light, and to move forward constructively through education and debate.

I was saddened to learn of the recent death of the architect and teacher Samuel Mockbee, who was known for his work for impoverished families in the rural South. Besides his own extraordinary houses, churches, and public buildings, Mockbee also established Auburn University's Rural Studio. With "Sambo," a group of students moved to rural Mississippi each semester and built houses for poor families. More than any other architect of influence, the death of Samuel Mockbee puts an end to a form of architectural leadership on this matter.
2. Saturday  

2. Saturday  

3. Sunday  
Sex and the (Eternal) City: The Grand Tour as Erotic Pilgrimage. Lecture on sexual and aesthetic liberation in the 18th century with LACMA curator Kevin Salatino. The Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., LA, 4PM, res. req. 310.491.6100.

3. Sunday  

4. Monday  

4. Monday  

5, 7, 9, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday  

6, Wednesday  

6, Wednesday  
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Philhamonica Quentin Berlioz. Program aboard RMS Queen Mary, built by John Brown & Co. (1934). The Da Camera Society, RMS Queen Mary, 1126 Queen Mary St., Long Beach; 6PM; $30-41, res. req. 310.954.4300.

7, Thursday  

7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 28, 31  
Thursday, Sunday  
Drawing Italy. Artist Stas Drozvks demonstrates how artists use sketches of vistas and architectural details. The Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., LA, 1-3PM. 310.440.7300. getty.edu.

8, Friday  

9, Saturday  
Means of Egress. Class on exit strategies with plans examiner Ronald Danville. UCLA Extension, Westwood, 8AM-5PM; $100; res. req. 310.825.9061. uclaextension.org.

10. Saturday  

12, Tuesday  

14, Thursday  
Designing the Future. Designing Home Theater and Ideas for downtown LA.

15, Friday  
Owen Lang. Lecture with urban designer at Sasaki Associates. SF, ASLA/San Diego, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 700 Prospect St., La Jolla; 7PM; 6-7 858.454.3541.

16, Saturday  
CUBAFEST 2002 PROGRAM WITH PHOTOGRAPHER WILLIAM HENDRICKS.

19, Tuesday  

21, Thursday  
Owen Lang. Lecture with urban designer at Sasaki Associates. SF, ASLA/San Diego, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 700 Prospect St., La Jolla; 6PM; 5-7 858.454.3541.

22, Friday  

23, Saturday  

23, Saturday  
Architecture of Old Cuba. Cubafest 2002 program with The Houses of Old Cuba author Lillian Llanes. Santa Monica College Academy of Entertainment and Technology, 1660 Stewart St., SM; 2PM; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

26, Tuesday  
Introduction to Feng Shui. Class with Katar Diamond. Santa Monica College, John Adams Middle School, SM; 6:30-9PM; $45; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.

26-27, Tuesday-Wednesday  

29, Friday  
Michelangelo. Lecture with art historian Mario Semeco. Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Blvd., SM; 6PM; $10; res. req. 310.434.3400. events.smc.edu.
1. Monday
Annual Student Lighting Design Awards: Designers Lighting Forum. 6PM. 310.535.0105. dfda.org

2. Monday

3. Tuesday
Corrado Gaudio. Slide talk with architect lone Stiegler and guests to the community's spirit of Long Beach. Long Beach Heritage; WPA Mural, 3rd St. and the Promenade, LB; 10AM; res. req. 310.659.3326. www.smc.edu/

4. Tuesday
Tours of various downtown landmarks. L.A. Conservancy, 10AM-Midnight, 310.235.5410.

5. Tuesday

6. Tuesday
Architects in Historic Sites: Bruce Marks. Children's program about Jewish cowboys and pioneers. The Da Camera Society, Doheny Mansion, 8 Chester Place, LA; 2PM and 4PM; $30-$40; res. req. 310.954.4300.

7. Thursday
Archibald Knox for Liberty & Company. Lecture with art historian Leah Roland. Friends of the Gamble House, 4 Westmoreland Pl., Pasadena; 7PM; $5; res. req. 562.493.7019. gamblehouse.usc.edu

8. Thursday
LA Open Day. Full day of 14 tours of private LA gardens. The Garden Conservancy, 10AM-4PM; $5 per garden. 888.842.2442. gardenconservancy.org

9. Friday

10. Saturday
LA Twilight Walking Tour. Walking tour of historic downtown Long Beach. Long Beach Heritage; 4PM; $30-$40; res. req. 310.954.4300.

11. Saturday
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12. Saturday
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Dialogues. Medieval chant at Pacific Lutheran Church, designed by H.C. Newton and R.D. Murray (1932). The Da Camera Society, Pacific Lutheran Church, 435 S. Occidental, LA; 4PM and 4:30PM; $5-32; res. req. 310.954.4300.

13. Saturday
LA Twilight Walking Tour. Walking tour of historic downtown Long Beach. Long Beach Heritage; 4PM; $30-$40; res. req. 310.954.4300.

14. Saturday
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Dialogues. Medieval chant at Pacific Lutheran Church, designed by H.C. Newton and R.D. Murray (1932). The Da Camera Society, Pacific Lutheran Church, 435 S. Occidental, LA; 4PM and 4:30PM; $5-32; res. req. 310.954.4300.

15. Saturday

16. Saturday
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Gryphon Piano Trio. Music at The Doheny Mansion, designed by Hunt and Easton (1926). The Da Camera Society, Doheny Mansion, 8 Chester Place, LA; 2PM and 3:30PM; $47-70; res. req. 310.954.4300.

17. Saturday
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Architectural Heritage; 12:30PM; $5; res. req. 323.857.6010. events.smc.edu.

18. Saturday
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Architectural Heritage; 12:30PM; $5; res. req. 323.857.6010. events.smc.edu.

19. Saturday
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Desert Dreams: The Modern Residences of Palm Springs. Full-day on-site tour of Palm Springs modernism. 8AM-7PM; $150. res. req. 800.SIAHSCC. See back page for order form.

20. Saturday

21. Sunday
Chamber Music in Historic Sites: Gryphon Piano Trio. Music at The Doheny Mansion, designed by Hunt and Easton (1926). The Da Camera Society, Doheny Mansion, 8 Chester Place, LA; 2PM and 3:30PM; $47-70; res. req. 310.954.4300.

22. Sunday

Webb is a contributing writer for *Architectural Digest*, and also writes for *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *Domus*, *A+U*, *Graphis*, and *The Architectural Review*. Other recent books include *Beach Houses, Architecture + Design LA, It's a Great Wall!* and *Through the Windows of Paris*.

Coffee and beverages will be served. This event is free for all SAH/SCC members, but reservations are required; call 800.9SAHSCC, or e-mail info@sahscc.org. Card-carrying SAH/SCC members receive a 10 percent discount on all books purchased at Form Zero, 811 Traction Avenue.

The California Pop-Up Book, by Ileen Farnan Antonier; design and engineering by David Hawcock and Wesley Betts. A fanciful romp through California’s history, this interactive publication (almost too limiting to call it a “book”) brings the best of the state’s heritage alive. In the pop-up form, architecture is most expressive, and readers will be delighted by the renditions of Riverside’s Mission Inn, Egyptian Theatre, Watts Towers, Case Study House #22, Sea Ranch, and Disney Concert Hall. Each page is filled with information presented in minibooklets, pull-out posters, postcards, and other die-cut wonders. This pop-up book is published in conjunction with ACMA and its “Made in California” exhibition. Although visually so compelling, the book is full of essays on all aspects of the state’s historical and cultural offerings: literature, film, music, art, cuisine, poetry, fashion, and architecture. Familiar contributors include Jerry Brown, Buddy Collette, Joan Didion, Salvador Dali, William Faulkner, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Terry Gilliam, Thomas S. Hines, Dennis Hopper, Gloria Koenig, Kevin Starr, and Lawrence Weschler. Universe Publishing/Rizzoli; $45.

California: This Golden Land of Promise, by Joan Irvine Smith and Jean Stern. California’s early history is told through art and artifacts in this lavishly illustrated 365-page volume written to accompany the recent exhibition of the same name at The Irvine Museum. We start the journey with evidence of “The First Settlers”—12,000-year-old artifacts found in southern San Joaquin Valley and Kern County. The narrative winds its way through the Spanish exploration, the Portola Expedition, mission culture, colonization, the “Golden Age” of California along with its politics in the mid-19th century, immigration, trappers, gold rush, and on into statehood. Meant to be a populist history, the book is illustrated with landscape, genre, and historical paintings, including many sterling examples of California Plein-Air painting. This is also a personal history, as its final chapter devoted to James Irvine I makes clear. Joan Irvine Smith is the Irvine Ranch founder’s great granddaughter and president of the board of the namesake museum. Chapman University Press/The Irvine Museum, hardcover, $50.

Victorian Glory in San Francisco and the Bay Area, by Paul Duchscherer; photographs by Douglas Keister. Historic and present-day photographs of the Bay Area’s legendary “painted ladies” illustrate this 200-page guide to Victorian architecture. After an introduction to the local history and legends, the book is organized primarily by style (Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, etc.) with most chapters opening with illustrations from 19th-century architectural pattern books. Restoration-minded readers will be enchanted by the “Before and After” chapter showing remarkable transformations. In-depth captions give copious details. There’s also a listing of historic house museums appearing in the book (and even those that don’t) for a self-guided tour. Penguin Putnam, hardcover, $32.95.

The Furniture of Sam Maloof, by Jeremy Adamson. Published in conjunction with the recent exhibition at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, this beautiful book details the life and work of Maloof, one of California’s more celebrated furniture designers. Each chronological chapter opens with a stunning detail photograph by Jonathan Pollock of an iconic piece of furniture. The 273-page book is also generously illustrated with family photographs, design sketches, and numerous reprints from magazines, showing the convergence of design and media in selling the “California lifestyle.” Smithsonian American Art Museum/W.W. Norton & Company, hardcover, $60.
For those of you who missed out on recent SAH/SCC tours, or would like more information for your reference, here's an opportunity to get your hands on the publications printed especially for SAH/SCC events. Don't let another chance pass you by.

The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura: 20-page guide. at $10 each

Modernism for the Masses: three-fold brochure with inserts of detailed floorplans of Eichler homes visited on the tour to Orange County. at $10 each members

Cool Pools: Booklet and cassette tape from "Reflections on Water: Cool Pools Along Sunset Boulevard" at $10 each members at $15 each non-members


Reconsidering Lloyd Wright: 21-page, four-color brochure from "Reconsidering Lloyd Wright House Tour" at $10 each

Union Station and MTA Transit Center: A two-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos. at $2 each

Spanish Romance: Four brochures of San Marino and Pasadena, visiting historic landmarks such as the Mission San Gabriel, El Maloia Viejo, Mrs. Ether Guthrie's House, and Mrs. Grace A. Ohmuro's House. at $2 each

Eagle Rock — LA's Home Town: 17-page handbook with history and self-guided tour of Eagle Rock, by Jeff Samudio. at $4 each

Reconsidering Lloyd Wright: 21-page, four-color brochure from "Reconsidering Lloyd Wright House Tour" at $10 each

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Desert Dreams - April 13th

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10% discount at Form Zero Architectural Books + Gallery

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