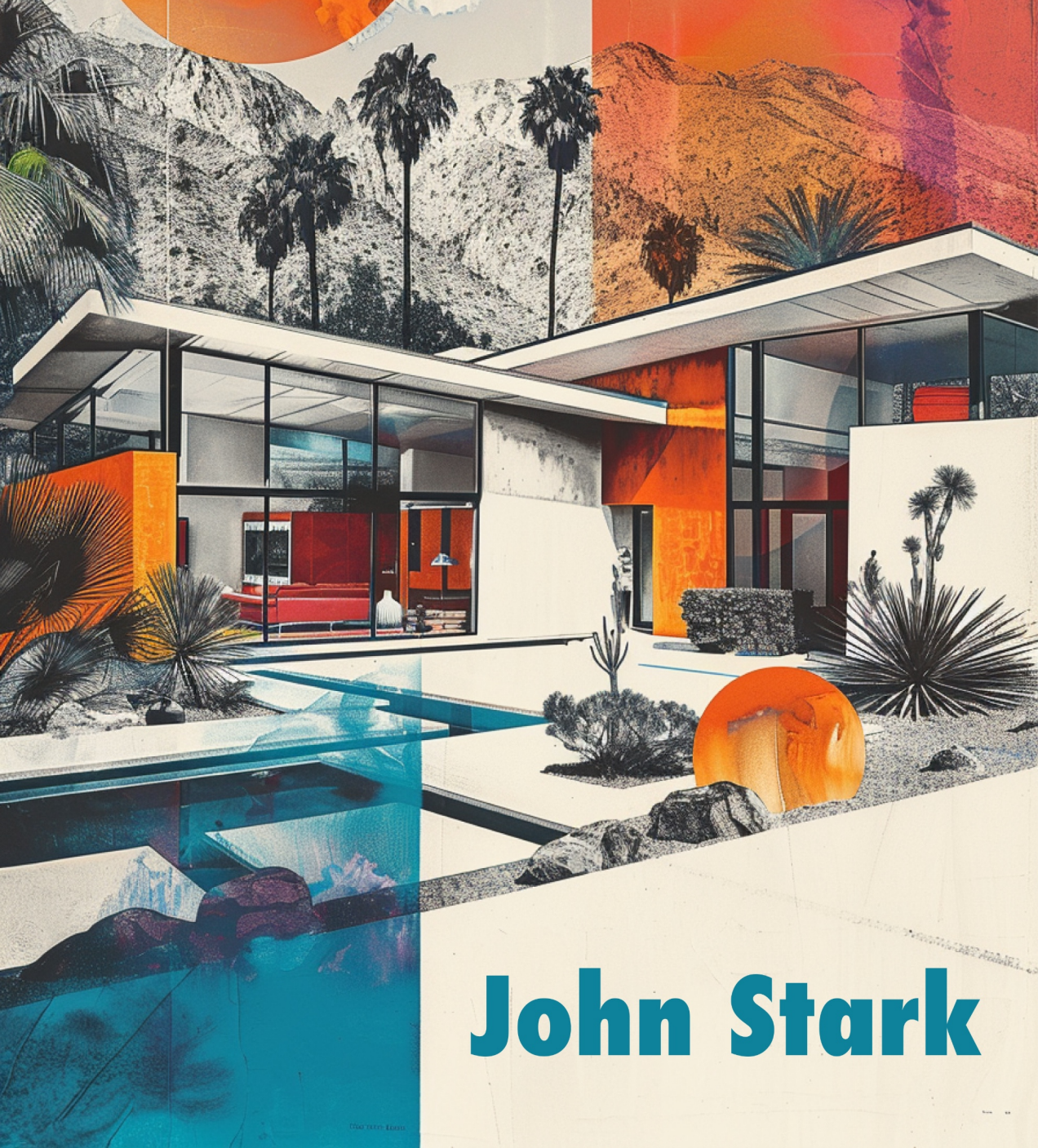


SNEAK PEEK:

Explore Palm Springs' Modernist Marvels



John Stark

TAKE A SNEAK PEEK INTO PALM SPRINGS' FIRST MODERNIST NEIGHBORHOOD

Step back in time to the birthplace of modernist architecture in Palm Springs. This exclusive sneak peek takes you through the heart of the city's first modernist neighborhood, where groundbreaking design and innovative spirit converge. Discover the hidden stories behind the homes that defined an era and continue to inspire architects around the world today.



AS YOU EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING PAGES, YOU'LL UNCOVER:

- **Exclusive Architectural Insights:** Learn about the key design elements that set these homes apart, from clean lines to minimalist beauty.
- **Historical Context:** Understand how Palm Springs became a hub for modernist innovation and meet the architects who led the charge.
- **Stunning Visuals:** Enjoy high-quality images showcasing the exteriors and interiors of these iconic homes, capturing their timeless appeal.

But remember, this sneak peek is just the beginning. What to See in Palm Springs delves even deeper into the lives of the visionaries who built these homes, the cultural impact of their work, and the legacy they've left on Palm Springs. If you crave a comprehensive guide that blends rich history with architectural beauty, the full book is a must-have.

So, take your time. Let the clean lines and open spaces transport you back to a time when the future was bright, and Palm Springs was at the forefront of it all.

Sunmor Estates

City Hall/Airport



Newly renovated Sunmor mod-pod.

Tucked behind City Hall is Sunmor Estates. You'll see the sign for the entrance to the retro neighborhood at Farrell Drive and Livmor Avenue, a block or so north of Tahquitz Canyon Drive. The model home, bearing a plaque, is at 2821 Livmor. The house above is on Plaimor.

Sunmor is a remarkably intact collection of mid-century modern houses. Don Draper couldn't have marketed them any better. "Enchanted homes," the brochures said. Street names are a play on words that evoke suburban bliss: Morsun, Livmor, Easmor and Plaimor. Palm Springs's cowboy mayor, Frank Bogert, lived at 2787 East Plaimor Ave., giving the enclave panache.



Built in the mid-to-late 1950s, the single-family post-and-beam houses are about 1,350 square feet, have carports (or did) and originally sold for \$17,500. Although Twin Palms Estates is credited as being Palm Springs's first modernist tract development, Sunmor is a very close second, if not tied. Unlike Twin Palms Estates,

these houses didn't come with swimming pools. Pools were special-order. Unlike Twin Palms Estates, they did come with air conditioning. Many in this subdivision have been refurbished back to their original coolness. Check out those long slanted rooflines, as sexy as slingback kitten heels.

The enclave was designed by desert architects Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison and built, at least in the beginning, by developer Bob Higgins. After 1957, it was completed by William Krisel and the Alexander Construction Company. This change took place after 11 of the 45 houses were completed. Stories vary as to what happened. Two cul-de-sacs are named after members of the Alexander family, Helena and Jill circles. If you want more Sunmor, there's an extension of the neighborhood on East Juanita Drive off Farrell Drive. Sunmor is a designated Class 1 Historic Neighborhood.

HISTORIC TIE-DOWNS



The concrete circle on Easmor is also a protected Class 1 historic site. During World War II, this area was a military base and airfield. Unlike the coast, the clear desert air almost always allowed for takeoffs and landings. Military aircraft of every type were stored here, on high alert for a Japanese attack. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built the circles, which are called tie-downs or hardstand circles. The planes at night were secured by fasteners so that no one could steal them. The planes were serviced, inspected and by morning dispersed to allied bases around the world. Notice that the east end of Sunmor has a street called Airplane Drive.

WANT MORE HIDDEN GEMS?

You've just scratched the surface of Palm Springs' modernist treasures. Imagine unlocking even more iconic neighborhoods, untold stories, and breathtaking visuals that bring the era's architectural brilliance to life.

What to SEE in



IN THE FULL BOOK, YOU'LL DISCOVER:

- **Exclusive Neighborhoods:** Dive into other modernist enclaves that shaped Palm Springs' legacy.
- **Architect Interviews:** Hear directly from the visionaries, including insights from the last living modernists of the 1950s and '60s.
- **Over 200 Original Photographs:** Immerse yourself in the beauty and detail of Palm Springs, with images you won't find anywhere else.
- **Insider Stories:** Explore the anecdotes and histories that make these homes more than just buildings — they're living pieces of art.

Get The Entire Book Here!

Don't miss out on the full journey through Palm Springs' architectural history.

[Click here to unlock the complete Palm Springs experience!](#)

Twin Palms Estates

South Palm Springs



If I were limited to showing only one location on a tour, it would be the Twin Palms Estates neighborhood. It's where and how Palm Springs became what it is today.

The Twin Palms Estates is so called because every house has two palm trees out front. They were an eye-catching selling point when the neighborhood was developed from 1957-58. However, these 90 houses had many other more important buyer attractions.

Besides being Palm Springs's first suburb, the Twin Palms neighborhood changed the way Americans lived after World War II. When architect William Krisel and the Alexander Construction Company developed the neighborhood, they tapped into the zeitgeist of the era, that being Indoor/ outdoor living. Buyers snapped up these modernist houses within weeks after they went to market. Many bought them solely from photographs. Most were purchased as second homes. Surprisingly, they did not come with central air. They didn't need to. Unlike today, Palm Springs was a ghost town in the summer months, when temps could hit 120 degrees.

Until the arrival of modernists like Krisel, and builders like the father and son duo of George and Robert Alexander, Palm Springs was largely for the rich and famous. The modernists believed that the middle class should also be able to enjoy life here. Casual indoor-outdoor living was what young Americans were ready for, and Twin Palms delivered. The sleek, single-level houses were designed to blur the lines between indoors and outdoors: butterfly roofs,



For a 2007 remodeling job of this house, William Krisel designed a modernist front yard.

atriums, breezeways, open carports and sliding glass doors. Each house came with a pool, unheard of in a tract development. The fronts of the houses have clerestory windows, which provide privacy and light. Clerestory windows are ones placed above a roof or ceiling line.

Situated on 10,000-square foot lots, these houses originally cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000. To keep prices affordable to the middle class, Krisel and the Alexanders built each house post and beam. They used post-war, low-cost, standardized building materials. Krisel was determined that this suburban neighborhood was not to resemble Levittown, N.Y. He wanted each house to appear as if it had been custom built. To achieve that sleight-of-hand affect, he switched front door and footprint orientations. He varied rooflines, which included Polynesian, slanted, flat and the now iconic butterfly, which he introduced to Palm Springs — some 20 of them in Twin Palms Estates.

Choosing a floor plan wasn't difficult as each of the 1,600-square-foot houses have the same one: Living room, two bedrooms, den and two bathrooms. Kitchens were made small and open-concept because modern moms didn't need to be in front of a stove all day. And dads could be found on the patio grilling dinner.

Krisel had still another revolutionary idea for this Palm Springs neighborhood. Before, most Palm Springs houses were traditional adobe. Krisel believed color belonged in the desert. His experiment worked: Bright playful hues complemented the environment and is a signature feature of mid-century modernism.

Even though the entire Twin Palms neighborhood has Class 1 historical preservation status, only a few houses have historical plaques out front. Those that do still have their original carports. Over the years, carports were largely converted to garages.



Sci-fi author Ray Bradbury lived at 1837 South Caliente Road in Twin Palms Estates.

If the Twin Palms neighborhood as we know it hadn't been built, Palm Springs would look very different today. Because their vision proved so successful, Krisel and the Alexanders went on to build 1,240 post-and-beam houses in 12 other Palm Springs locations, doubling the city's population in the process.

The irony of Twin Palms Estates is that much of the middle-class can't afford them anymore.

FUN FACT

Architect William Krisel and builders George and Robert Alexander built 1,240 houses in Palm Springs. Besides Twin Palms Estates, other locations include Vista Las Palmas (330 houses); Ramon Rise (84 houses); Sunmor Estates (141 houses); Racquet Club Road Estates (360 houses); Steel Houses (7 houses); New Riviera Gardens (31 houses); Farrell Canyon Estates (57 houses); Golf Club Estates (52 houses); Sunrise Estates (21 houses); Green Fairway Estates (27 houses); Araby Estates (40 houses).

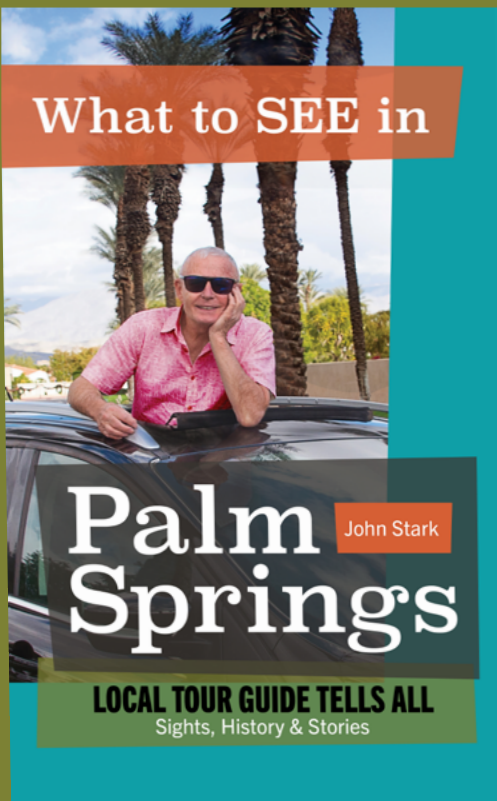


The Twin Palms neighborhood is located directly behind the Ocotillo Lodge on East Palm Canyon Drive. The house to the left once belonged to Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fischer.

READY TO EXPLORE MORE?

You've just had a glimpse into the iconic neighborhoods and architectural wonders that make Palm Springs a modernist paradise. But there's so much more waiting for you.

What to SEE in



IN THE FULL GUIDE, WHAT TO SEE IN PALM SPRINGS, YOU'LL UNCOVER:

- Hidden stories behind even more iconic homes and neighborhoods.
- Exclusive interviews with legendary architects who shaped Palm Springs.
- Over 200 stunning photographs that capture the essence of modernist design.

Get The Entire Book Here!

Don't Miss Out - Get Your Copy Today!
Ready to dive deeper into Palm Springs' rich architectural history? Click the button below to purchase What to See in Palm Springs and unlock the full experience.

[Click here to grab your copy now!](#)