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Best-Laid Plans

An unexpected meeting of Eichler enthusiasts paves the way for a whole new generation of midcentury masterpieces.





FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS ALLOW DESERT EICHLER GUESTS TO RELAX IN CARL HANSEN & SON CHAIRS AND TAKE IN PALM SPRINGS' MARVELOUS CLIMATE. AIR PLANTS FROM LOCAL VENDOR JUST MODERN BRING THE OUTSIDE IN, WHILE AN ORIGINAL MODFIRE-DESIGNED FIREPLACE KEEPS THINGS COZY ON COLDER NIGHTS.

"WHY DIDN'T EICHLER EVER BUILD IN PALM SPRINGS?" was the question that started it all for Troy Kudlac of KUD Properties and his wife, Amy. In 2013, the couple found themselves in the middle of a good crop of midcentury property renovations. While they enjoyed the work, they had begun to see a change in the structure of the market, and didn't see aggressive growth in the repositioning of properties. Soon, they started researching building "something significant and modern ... something to pay homage."

In the three Desert Eichler homes that have been completed to date, every material has been carefully chosen to dovetail practicality with historical context.



In the course of their research, they asked themselves why Joseph Eichler never built in Palm Springs. After all, his aesthetic would suit the desert so well. “Eventually we started thinking, ‘How cool would it be to build houses like this?’” Troy explains. They began researching how to license Eichler plans, and in the midst of their efforts, they attended a screening of realtor Monique Lombardelli’s documentary *People in Glass Houses: The Legacy of Joseph Eichler* at Palm Springs Modernism Week. After the film, Monique gave a short speech, commenting, “I love these Eichlers so much—they have so many great qualities. I want to see more built.” At that point, Troy and Amy exchanged bewildered looks. How did she know?

Troy went up and introduced himself afterward, and the rest is modernist history. Monique had already done much of the ‘leg work,’ going through archives and meeting with Eichler owners, the Eichler family and architects’ families. “It really felt like riding her coattails and bringing the dream to fruition,” Troy says. The couple struck up a partnership

with Monique, giving KUD rights as the exclusive Eichler builder in Palm Springs, and the yearlong process of getting a digitized, hand-drawn set of plans and bringing them up to code began.

The process of translating Eichler’s vision to new terrain while maintaining a proper level of reverence bore its own set of challenges—as well as the questions of what modern updates they could make without compromising on authenticity.

“Steve [Shields of Shields Residential] and I teamed up to walk neighborhoods in Orange [County] and knock on Eichler doors saying ‘Hey, nice house,’” Troy says. “Everyone was so friendly in the neighborhood and liked each other—we took what they loved, hated and changed about their own homes into account while building.”

With these additional perspectives in mind, Troy put on his “Joseph Eichler glasses” and set to work making the plans Palm Springs-friendly. “We took the windows down to sliders since it’s not the Bay area. We took out the wall