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William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language Of Modernism



Synopsis

This first major monograph chronicling the work and architectural philosophy of William Krisel features examples and insights from Krisel's own papers, culled from his personal collection as well as the extensive archives of the Getty Research Institute. Krisel's architectural drawings and renderings, as well as many archival photographs, highlight examples of his custom homes, mass-produced housing, and recreational facilities in Palm Springs and rest of the Coachella Valley.

Heidi Creighton is a midcentury modern enthusiast, writer, collector, and researcher. In 2012, she purchased a Palm Springs home designed by William Krisel in 1957. Chris Menrad, a Southern California native, was drawn to Palm Springs in 1999 by its abundance of modernist architecture. He is a founding board member of the Palm Springs Modern Committee, an organization dedicated to the preservation of Desert Modern architecture and a real estate agent specializing in architectural properties in the Coachella Valley. He lives in a Krisel designed home, which was the first Palm Springs' Class One historic Krisel/Alexander built house.

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Customer Reviews

"William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language of Modernism is a wonderful book for readers like me, casually interested in residential architecture and its uniquely California development after World War II. In a very personal context, the reader learns of Bill Krisel's contributions and visions leading to the evolution of Southern California Midcentury Modernism in the Palm Springs/Coachella Valley. Well-documented through narrative, first hand accounts,

photographs, and drawings, a history emerges of primarily residential, but also commercial architectural exploration at a time of economic optimism. It chronicles Bill Krisel's passion for a broader and more holistic residential experience, accessible to the rapidly growing middle class. Here the human spirit can flourish through integration of outdoor and indoor living. Each new suburban residential tract could reflect the local geography and environment and be affordable. Light and lighting, shadow, vista, water, planting, warm natural color, furniture, and textured grounds encourage movement and community. This becomes the new residential experience for many. The dynamic nature of the development of Midcentury Modernism is well developed in a style and language that can be appreciated by the general reader such as myself. I grew up in a Northern California Midcentury Modern residence (Carter Sparks, 1962.) The house my parents built expanded the boundaries of living, sharing many elements with what is seen here---the extensive use of glass walls and sliding doors, decks and patios, sloping roofline, concrete block, and privacy walls, without curtains anywhere! Often friends and neighbors reacted to my parent's suburban home with comments such as "interesting" and "different." Now, these elements of daily living, so clearly outlined here, are taken for granted in California. This book brings to focus many of the forces that prompted this visionary architect to explore and permanently change California living in new and dynamic ways. It is a joy to read." (Stephen Follansbee 2015-11-19)

I am an ordinary man with opinions. About color. About shape. About utility. I prefer a simple line, architecturally speaking. And I like a bit of whimsy, too. What better place to tickle these desires than Palm Springs, California and now there is a beautiful book in the form of a tribute to William Krisel, major architect of the Midcentury Modern design movement which, for Southern California, symbolized the power of the growing middle class during a time of economic expansion and post war optimism. The book is full of photographs and also drawings by Mr. Krisel which he made at the start of each of his projects and which, in and of themselves, are works of art that capture the modern style of the 1950's and 60's. Each chapter in the book highlights a perspective of design: location, orientation within the property, wall contour and texture, color, light, shadow, landscape, water elements, indoor/outdoor continuity. All count in the overall effect and success of each project. And all must coalesce into an affordable package. It is a joy to read anecdotes about how Mr. Krisel developed his vision for superb design and affordability in the expanding tract housing market of the 1950's, but it is equally as interesting to view his designs for individual homes and commercial enterprises. This book is beautifully edited and researched with superb photographs and documents obtained from the Getty Research Institute. It is now an essential part of our Midcentury Modern library. (Richard A. Wolitz

2016-01-03)

Heidi Creighton is a midcentury modern enthusiast, writer, collector, and researcher. In 2012, she purchased, restored, and updated a Palm Springs home designed by William Krisel in 1957. Chris Menrad, a Southern California native, was drawn to Palm Springs in 1999 by its abundance of modernist architecture. He is a founding board member of the Palm Springs Modern Committee, an organization dedicated to the preservation of Desert Modern architecture and a real estate agent specializing in architectural properties in the Coachella Valley. He lives in a Krisel-designed home, which was the first Palm Springs "Class One" historic Krisel/Alexander-built house.

A real contribution to the body of architectural knowledge about mid century design. Living in a Krisel designed house, the book adds extra appreciation for his work

Very informative and really nice images. Makes me want to hop a plan to visit.

Excellent resource! Beautifully photographed

A wonderful book--thoroughly enjoyed!

Just what I wanted.

I love it. There is so much information and so many photos from that era that you can enjoy reading it all the time.

Gorgeous Mid-Century Modern Coffee Table Book

Awesome book. It's not just a coffee table book--it has a well-written overview of Krisel's life, his work, and his legacy. Interesting AND beautiful.

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