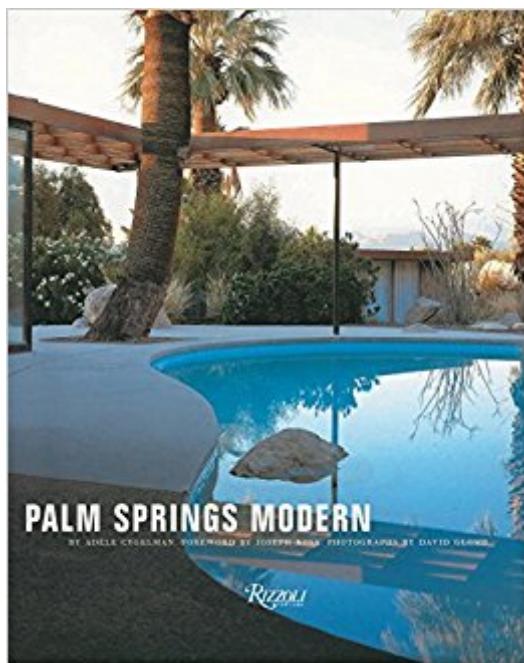


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# Palm Springs Modern: Houses In The California Desert (Rizzoli Classics)



## Synopsis

This classic volume, now available at a lower price, showcases jet-set homes designed by the likes of Neutra, Frey, Lautner, and others. Palm Springs is famous as a mecca for the international jet set. But the city has also attracted its share of eccentrics and mavericks who have left an architectural legacy that remains unsurpassed for its originality and international influence. This book examines the impact that architects and designers have had on the desert oasis, primarily from the 1940s to the 1960s. Palm Springs Modern features examples of midcentury modernism at its most glamorous, some of them the residences of prominent figures who commissioned weekend getaways in the desert, including Frank Sinatra, Walter Annenberg, and Raymond Loewy.

Adèle Cygelman's insightful text, a foreword by architectural historian Joseph Rosa, contemporary color photography by David Glomb, and the celebrated archival black-and-white work of Julius Shulman all capture the distinctly modern allure of America's famed desert playground.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When designers such as Richard Neutra, John Lautner, and Albert Frey came together with members of the Hollywood elite like Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, and Lucille Ball, they produced luxury homes nestled in bouldered hills and vacation estates located along green fairways. Palm Springs Modern documents this 40-year architectural explosion in the California desert. One of the more dramatic collaborations was between Los Angeles architect Quincy Jones and billionaire Walter

Annenberg, erstwhile publisher and ambassador to Britain under Richard Nixon. Annenberg and his wife, Lee, commissioned the Rancho Mirage Estate house with the express purpose of entertaining such heavyweights as Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, and Ronald Reagan. Jones envisioned water and green grass on the outside--"I don't want to see one grain of sand except in the golf traps"--and an interior sympathetic to the Annenbergs' collection of impressionist art and oriental antiques. Near the end of the two-year project, Lee asked that the Japanese- and Mayan-inspired pyramidal roof be pink. So it was that pink became the signature hue of the Annenbergs' fabulous Rancho Mirage home. Using many of the same general principles Jones employed--an open floor plan and the integration of the interior and exterior spaces--Donald Wexler and Ric Harrison's Steel Development Houses represent a very different perspective. Built almost entirely of steel, concrete, and glass, these 1,400-square-foot houses cost between \$13,000 and \$17,000 in 1962 and could be built in three days. They are minimal in design, aside from the butterfly ceilings, and are incredibly energy efficient. By using steel instead of wood, the buildings are expected to last for many, many years with little or no maintenance. Who would have guessed that the Bauhaus principles, which originated in Germany with Walter Gropius, would find their way to the California desert? Author Adele Cygelman offers a succinct history beginning with the rise of desert modernity in the 1930s through to its fall from grace in the early 1970s. The photographs by David Glomb are spectacular. All together, *Palm Springs Modern* is a tantalizing feast of some of the very best mid-century domestic design. --Loren E. Baldwin --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Between 1940 and 1970, architects created a uniquely important collection of International Style houses in Palm Springs for their jet-set clientele. Now Architectural Digest editor Cygelman and photographer Glomb offer a glowing tribute to 19 of these homes, from Neutra's sublime Kaufmann House to the campy glitz of Ambassador Walter Annenberg's desert oasis. The text conveys basic historical facts but is largely a breezy, anecdotal whirlwind tour of the vacation destinations of the rich and famous. Glomb's revelatory color photos (supplemented by vintage black-and-white shots by Julius Shulman) are the chief attraction here. But even they can't make up for the absence of floor plans or an index. Buy for local interest, for collections specializing in 20th-century design, and for any library that occasionally indulges in a delectable, sure-to-circulate coffee-table volume. ADavid Soltesz, Cuyahoga Cty. P.L., Parma, OH Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Palm Springs Modern provides a superb photo tour of a handful of landmark homes that defined the 'modern' style in the 1950s and '60s. Because wealthy businessmen and celebrities could afford edgier architecture, the authors focus on these homes -- with a welcome chapter on the talented William Cody in between. If you want a scholarly treatise on modernism in architecture, buy another book. If you want a tantalizing sample of some of the best work, PSM is fine. By the time modernism made its way into mass production homes, it lost much of its inventiveness and aesthetic. Those familiar with the Palm Springs area will notice that the Alexanders' ubiquitous 'butterfly' rooflines have become almost cliche, while the Loewy house and most of the PSM subjects remain exotic. Do you need to own PSM before buying or designing a home for the California desert? Clearly the answer is NO. But if you want a virtual tour of some of the most inspired homes of the genre, PSM belongs on your coffee table. And yes, if you live in the Midwest or Northeast you would do yourself a service by putting this away in a closet somewhere during the winter.

Great quality pictures and context

I love this book! Great depiction of famous mid-century homes and architects.

Purchased as a Valentine's Day gift, while visiting Palm Springs during Modernism week. Perfect!

I rather liked this book. Yes it's gushy and fluffy. I particularly liked the part about Walter Annenberg's interest in ecology after he turned 250 acres of desert into a personal Euro-Disney. However the pictures are nice, if somewhat disembodied from their context. The text is ridiculous, but I'm trying to get worked up to buy property there, so I was mainly interested in images. Of course, there is nothing useful in the way of floor plans, site maps, etc. However, if you live in the Midwest or New England and want to get really depressed about your current weather, this is the book to buy.

A classic. If you've never been to Palm Springs, you'll be catching the next flight after leafing thru this fine book. Gorgeous photos of simply incredible buildings. Palm Springs has a quality and character unlike any other "resort" town. The fabulous architecture of the mid-century building boom and a renewed appreciation of the designs of that period has revitalized (again) the Palm Springs area. If you can't visit Palm Springs personally, then pour a martini, sit back and enjoy this book. It's

almost like being there!

This book does serve a purpose, in that it gives a peek into a handful of distinguished Palm Springs residences. Sure, we get to see a few pictures of the famous Kaufmann house (by Neutra), and a few other houses that pretty much look like it, photographed in chilly and clinical detail, accompanied by a chilly monograph. But we have no sense of how these houses may have inspired more ordinary buildings in town, like the wonderful Alexander subdivisions -- which I'm told comprise the most consistent collection of modern suburban architecture in the USA. Where are the houses that regular folks live in? A few crumbs could have been thrown to the masses ... I would have liked some gas stations, some cool furniture, a dash of innovative interior design, perhaps. Go ahead and buy it, but I can pretty much guarantee that as a coffee table book, it's fairly unappetizing fare. And it doesn't much relate to the familiar Palm Springs modern style we all know and love.

Palm Springs Modern illustrates (in photos) a collection of homes by designers who tested design concepts in the harsh desert environment that complimented, and indeed enhanced the outcome. Those of us who seek inspiration and documentation of the modernist period will find this volume satisfying. It is not a scholarly book, nor is the text particularly deep in theory of architectural modernism. And it doesn't matter that some of the homeowners were celebrities. What really matters is that there are so many fine examples of modernist architecture and in such close proximity.

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