

the

# BottomLine

Desert's GLBT Publication

Palm Springs, California

## At Home in Palm Springs

MODERNISM AND MID-CENTURY FLAIR DOMINATE DESERT  
DESIGN, FURNISHINGS AND ARCHITECTURE

## Shag-a-delic

ONE-ON-ONE WITH POPULAR ARTIST JOSH AGLE

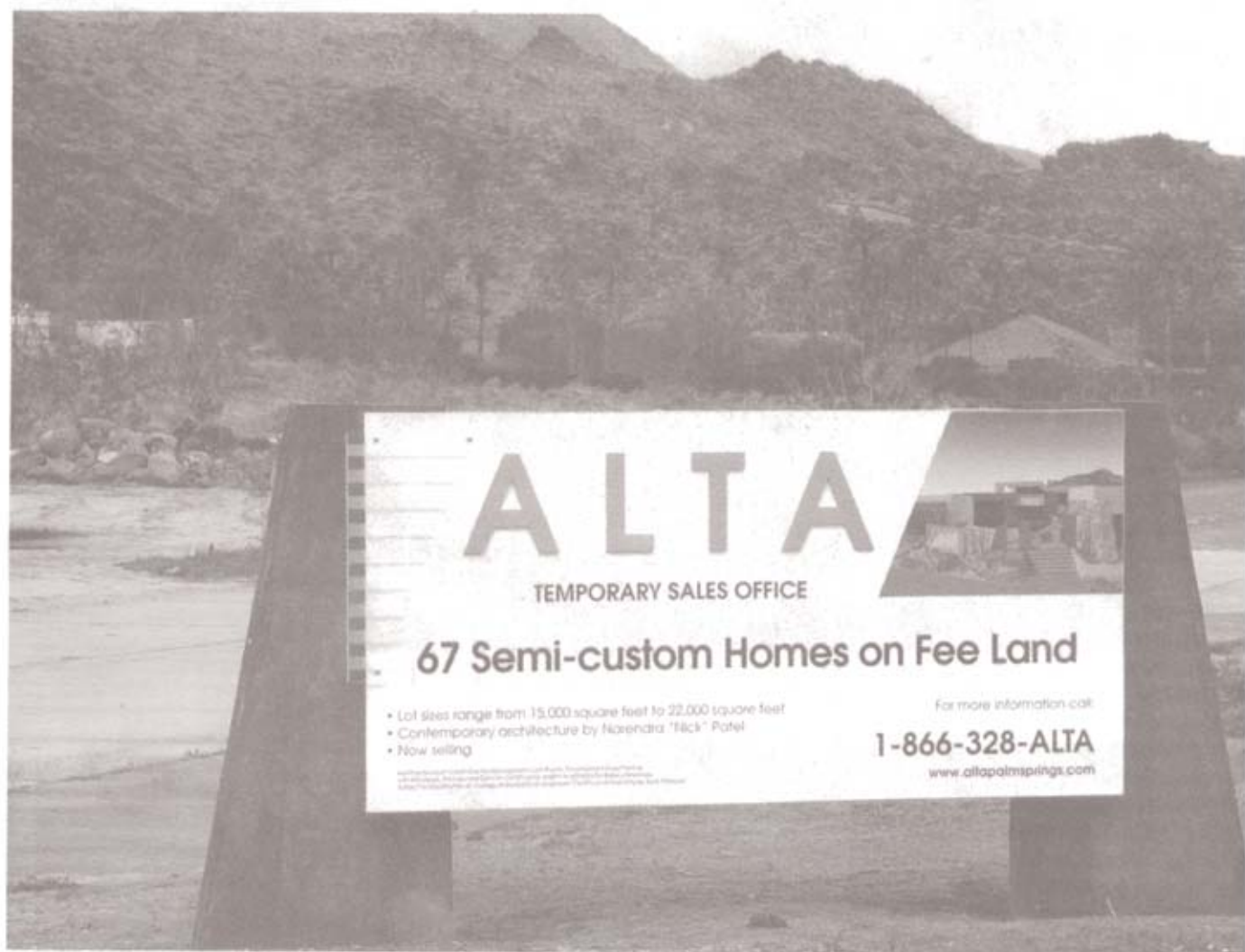
## Palm Springs International Film Festival

A QUEER RETROSPECTIVE



cover

# architecture



## ALTA Homes to Celebrate Palm Springs Architectural Legacy

By Kimberly Nichols



**O**n January 4, 2005 the dream team of Newport Coast Capitol Management, Devcon, ING Realty Partners and Patel Architecture broke ground in the hills of South Palm Springs, beneath the glorious Santa Rosas, for an exceptional enclave of million-dollar plus contemporary estate homes called Alta. The homes, touted as dream residences for architectural enthusiasts, represent a brilliant homage to the desert's unique marriage between design and nature. With an average lot size of 15,000 feet, the final sixty-seven estates will create a community poised to garner attention for being the first real estate development where architectural design was outsourced to a prominent and internationally-recognized custom home architectural firm.

"We are really committed to doing visionary projects that step beyond mainstream expectations," says Kim Bower, Marketing Executive for Newport Coast Capitol. "Our President Frank Eder wanted to do a super high-end community using custom architecture. We knew from the beginning that we wanted this project to reflect a celebration of architecture. Palm Springs seemed like the perfect place because of its reputation for superior mid-century modern design and the fact that so many phenomenal architects made their careers here."

Once a piece of land was chosen, the next challenge for the development company was in finding an architect willing to collaborate on the project.

"It wasn't easy," says Kim. "We interviewed local architects and other Southern Californian firms and found a lot of resistance. What we were proposing was something that architects tend to look down upon: custom architecture for a large housing project. Finally, we approached Patel Architecture, which is renowned worldwide."

Architect Narendra Patel's work encompasses not only contemporary multi-million dollar custom homes but also includes medical centers, commercial office buildings, corporate head-



(From left) Donald Wexler, Narendra Patel and Palm Springs Mayor Ron Oden at the Alta groundbreaking.

quarters, cultural and performing arts facilities and public institutional improvements. For this, Patel has been an eight-time recipient of the prestigious Gold Nugget Award—the premier West Coast recognition for creative achievements in architectural design.

hundred times during the project's development. The two men constantly worked together to brainstorm, refine, engineer and discover ways to keep costs in line without sacrificing the finished product. When they took the plans to Palm Springs City Council they found that their out-of-the-

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"Narendra Patel gave Frank Eder the opportunity to explain his vision and when he was done Narendra fully embraced the project. He said he didn't know exactly how he was going to do it, but he loved the challenge," remarks Kim.

This created a partnership in spirit between Eder and Patel that included meeting two to three

box creativity was embraced.

"We pushed the envelope of cutting-edge design," says Kim.

Future homeowners at Alta will drive down streets named for the architects that have led to Palm Springs' architectural allure: William Cody, John Lautner, Donald Wexler and Richard Neu-

Future homeowners at Alta will drive down streets named for the architects that have led to Palm Springs' architectural allure: William Cody, John Lautner, Donald Wexler, and Richard Neutra.



Donald Wexler signing "his" street marker.



Narendra Patel signing "his" street marker.

tra. Patel's name graces the central street through the project, signifying the thoughts of the developers that Patel is leading a brand new generation of architects in his ability to think beyond architecture's standards and typical limitations.

"It was interesting for us to discover that all the architects we named streets for were interrelated," Kim explains. "It adds a special touch. Lautner and Neutra studied at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin together. Wexler worked for Neutra in LA and then moved to Palm Springs to work for Cody. Later, when he was on his own, Patel walked into his office and began working for him."

"It was also funny to hear Donald Wexler recount his story of working for both Neutra and Cody," says Kim. "He said that even though they were both brilliant philosophers, they were so different. In Neutra's home studio he was amid a very stark and pristine environment looking out over the Pacific Ocean and with Cody, he was in a small home office made out of railroad ties with a five foot tall ceiling!"

Donald Wexler and Narendra Patel are the only two of the group still living and both attended the groundbreaking ceremony in a show of support. Both men signed their street markers proudly.

The Alta homes promise to be breathtaking in their detail and scope of design. Frank Eder was very meticulous about view protection and protecting the integrity of the natural desert land-

scape, making sure to protect the view corridors during the design process.

"We had an 18-foot height limitation on building," Kim explains. "They laid out the plans so that everyone will have a spectacular view and Patel went as far as creating the homes with seventeen foot high expanses of glass."

The homes boast other unique traits that enhance the lifestyle specific to desert living. Walls come with the option of having sliding pocket doors that completely disappear from view. In one plan, the dining room has two points that come together at the edge of the outdoor pool so that when the sliding doors are hid, there is a seamless edge between diners and water creating the illusion of floating. Another feature is the modularity of the homes which allows for residents to create the space towards their needs; offices can be dens, rooms can become gyms, and so on. The homes also offer attached or detached casitas for out of town guests.

One of the most exciting aspects of the Alta homes is the outdoor capacity. After doing extensive market research on Palm Springs residents it became clear to Newport Coast Capitol that valley denizens, widespread in their diversity, love to entertain.

"Our outdoor living areas can expand up to fifty percent of the home's square footage to accommodate that entertaining lifestyle," says Kim.

Alta Homes are currently in construction and

available for purchase. The projected completion date is June. Potential buyers can visit the sales office located in the infamous Alan Ladd building downtown on 500 S. Palm Canyon Drive. This is also home to the Design Center occupied by renowned valley designer Jeffrey Jurasky and his partner David Pitzer. Those wishing to visit the site can also stop in at 3200 South Palm Canyon Drive's second sales office at the corner of Bogart Trail to request a tour.

For more information via the web, visit [www.altapalmsprings.com](http://www.altapalmsprings.com).