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Home of the Week

A natural for Palm Springs

In a quiet desert cove, Midcentury is re-imagined in a fusion of glass and the great outdoors.

By DIANE WEDNER
Times Staff Writer

DEVELOPER Andy Sands couldn't believe his good fortune that a quiet cove on South Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs with San Jacinto Mountain views sat waiting for him. The rustic site cried out, he said, for a development that would let owners enjoy a fusion of indoor and outdoor living in homes reflecting the town's renowned architectural heritage.

That was 2½ years ago. Today, Alta — a master-designed, gated community of 67 contemporary homes, 21 of which have been completed so far — has won a host of awards, including in 2006 the prestigious Gold Nugget Home of the Year. Alta is owned by IRP El Portal Associates.

Inspired by the desert creations of Midcentury architectural innovators Don Wexler, Richard Neutra, John Lautner and William F. Cody, noted local firm Patel Architecture has created houses that capture that sensibility.

The homes — filled with light from abundant glass walls and windows — feature open-style floor plans in which rooms blend together and flow outdoors seamlessly.

"These homes are for locals and West Coast buyers who love great design," Sands said. "They're all about architecture and glass."

About this house: To realize the developers' and architect's vision of indoor-outdoor desert

living, this home, like others in the development, has walls of glass that disappear into pocket sliders (motorized versions are optional). As the glass vanishes, the home opens to a pool and spa with a Pebble Tec finish, designed by the development's architect, Narendra Patel.

The home's roof is inverted — a "V-frame," as it were, rather than an A-frame — to maximize the mountain views. Clerestory windows, or rows of windows above eye level, top the homes' glass doors.

Asking price: \$1.49 million.
Size: The 2,900-square-foot house, with four bedrooms and 4½ bathrooms, is on one-third of an acre. Homes elsewhere in the development range in size from 2,875 to 4,783 square feet.

Features: This home includes a master-suite sitting area; travertine tile floors; natural-slab stone countertops; high-end professional kitchen appliances; walk-in pantries; walk-in closets in all the bedrooms; fireplaces in the living room and master bedroom; and 12- to 15-foot ceilings in the main living areas.

A range of custom options are available, including a gym, an outdoor fireplace, a pool cabana, an attached guest house, a media room, a sunken wet bar, a wine cellar, a butler's pantry, exterior stone veneers and an all-glass front door that pivots open — the hinges are hidden.

Where: 276 Neutra St., Palm Springs

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Photographs by ARTHUR COLEMAN

BOLD LOOKS: It's "all about architecture and glass," Andy Sands says of the homes in his new Palm Springs development.



DESERT DINING: The kitchen features stainless-steel appliances, maple cabinets and large picture windows.



RELAXATION: Walls of glass disappear into sliders on the deck. Clerestory windows above eye level top the glass doors.