

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT

THE WILLIAM KEMP HOUSE ("THE LOST KRISEL") 1963

73140 Fiddleneck Lane, Palm Desert, CA



Photo by James Schnepf

The house is 3,500 sq. feet, and remains true to its original design by William Krisel. There are three bedrooms and baths each open to an outdoor space with striking desert views. The home still has the 10 foot tall spacious living room.

"The height of the room should be in scale with the width of the room. All the rooms have high windows. You can see the mountain ranges and the tops of the trees and sky. I like to bring the outdoors in, not only at eye level, but at sky level."
William Krisel.



Official Modernism Week Event

ARCHITECT:
WILLIAM KRISEL, A.I.A.

RESTORATION (2012-2013):
SEAN LOCKYER, A.I.A.

THE CONTRACTOR:
WILLIAM KEMP

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
WILLIAM KRISEL

INTERIOR DESIGN:
POSSIBLY VEE NISLEY

ORIGINAL OWNER:
WILLIAM KEMP



Photo: Tom Brewster, Palm Springs Life



Photo: Michal Utterback



Photo by Linda Holden Clode

William Krisel was born in Shanghai, China in 1924 to American parents. Bill grew up immersed in the culture and language of China as well as being exposed to the glamorous lifestyle of the movie stars of early Hollywood when the family moved to Beverly Hills in 1937.

He graduated Beverly Hills High School at the age of 16 and entered the USC School of Architecture. After serving in the military intelligence as a Chinese interpreter in WWII, Krisel returned to USC in 1946.

WILLIAM KRISEL

In 1950 Krisel partnered with Dan Saxon Palmer to form Palmer and Krisel, A.I.A. They believed in the promise of modern architecture and that everyone was entitled to good design.

In the mid-1950s Palmer & Krisel began working with George and Robert Alexander in Palm Springs. The team created homes that were simple and clean in design and feature open plans that connect to the landscape. Krisel was also a landscape architect.

In 1958 Krisel was selected to design The Sandpiper in Palm Desert. At the time, Krisel was designing homes all over Southern California, including several in Silver Spur, Palm Desert. His work shaped much of the modernist oeuvre in the desert.



Photo by Linda Holden Clode

SEAN LOCKYER

In 2012-2013 Sean Lockyer reimagined the home adhering to the ideals of Krisel.

He has been creating many modern custom homes for the past several years including some specular homes in Yucca Valley.

<http://www.studio-ard.com>

WILLIAM KEMP

Kemp was a Sandpiper Condominium owner who took over the completion of the Sandpiper Projects, Circles 5-12, under his company, Sandpiper Builders, Inc.. He was both the contractor and the original owner of the "Lost" Krisel.



Karen Prinzmetal. Photo: Linda Holden Clode



VEE NISLEY

It is possible that Vee Nisley, who did the spec homes and many others in the Sandpiper, was the Interior Designer for the "Lost" Krisel. The photo on the left is the 2012 reimagined kitchen.

LOST AND FOUND

This custom home was hiding in plain sight all along. A bit tired and faded, it was rediscovered by architectural historians Jim West and Karen Prinzmetal.

They approached Bill Krisel who confirmed that it was, indeed, a "Lost" Krisel. (Palm Springs Life, February 2012, [p.p. 54-59])

The home found new life by knowledgeable owners and their architect, Sean Lockyer, of Palm Springs and Los Angeles, who knew that the bones were that of a masterpiece.



Sean Lockyer & Jim West
Photo by Linda Holden Clode

In the early 1960's Krisel had drawn up plans for his client and partner in the Sandpiper Condominium project, William Kemp. Built in 1963, Krisel was unaware of its construction.



Karen Prinzmetal, Sean Lockyer & Jim West,
Photo by Linda Holden Clode

As Krisel said to Jim and Karen:

"I must tell you, in all my 70 years as an architect, this was a unique situation. You kind of think about it over the years and ... boom! - it happens. Someone says "I saw your home!" And then you discover it. And that it's doing well. It's like finding one of your children that got lost."

A Lost Krisel found! A happy ending.

Historical Society of Palm Desert
www.hspd.org

