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## JOHN P. MOYER

John Moyer was born in 1919 in Tennessee, but grew up in San Bernardino and graduated high school in 1938. He attended Valley College and later the Chouinard Art Institute in LA (CalArts today). He served 4 years in the US Air Force. After being shot down over Germany as a pilot of a Flying Fortress, he was held as a German POW for 2 years. His valor resulted in being awarded the Purple Heart with other medals and citations. John was discharged in 1945.

In 1947, he married Miriam (Sims) Moyer, 5 years later they moved to Palm Desert. In the mid-50s onward, he designed homes in Palm Desert with some in Palm Springs. In the earlier part of his career, he focused on custom projects and smaller tracts, for example, between 1956 and 1962, he designed multiple tract projects in Palm Springs for developer Jack Meiselman, totalling some 275 plus homes.

He was a member of the American Institute of Building Design (AIBD) established in 1950. By 1957, Moyer had become a well-known designer of custom-built desert homes. In the 1960's, he formed his own construction company, El Toro Development, and designed and built spec homes in Palm Desert.

As an artist, he showed his work in local exhibitions. He was also a horseman and organized horse shows and breed horses.

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## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT

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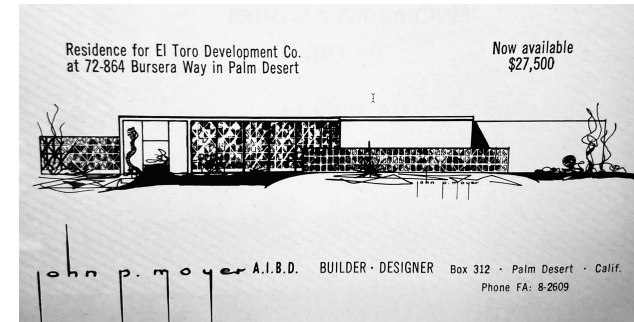
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## JOHN P. MOYER

1919-2007



El Toro Development, John P. Moyer



72-864 Bursera Way Palm Desert, CA  
2024

Moyer's work includes:

72632 Beavertail, 1961  
72539 Pitahaya, 1961  
72550 Pitahaya, 1962  
72629 Pitahaya, 1962  
72564 Pitahaya, 1962  
72476 Pitahaya, 1964  
72637 Beavertail, 1961 (Original price \$19,950)  
and  
72877 Bel Air Rd., Palm Desert, 1956 an excellent example of his work.

Moyer was best known for his Midcentury modern cabin referred to as the "Spider House" in Pinyon Crest, California, and featured in Architectural Digest (Spring 1964). He and his wife also restored and furnished a period revival hacienda-style home in La Quinta which was featured in the Los Angeles Times (Oct 11, 1964). He designed several residences and commercial buildings throughout the desert communities including the Gayle Building (1959) in the 100 block of East Palm Canyon Drive.

Moyer's residential designs were characterized by a wide, low profile and minimalist shapes with few or no windows on the front exterior elevations. They included clean lines, simple forms, and carports centered or to the side of the front exterior elevation. Roof lines were flat or had a very low slope. Fascias were painted wood with a clean and simple shape. Exterior plaster with aluminum windows and sliding doors were used in the construction. The floor plans emphasized, "bringing the outdoors in," with floor to ceiling windows and doors.

Special thanks to: Luke Leuschner  
Architectural Historian



72629 Pitahaya St, (1962)



The Spider House, John Moyer Sketch, Pinyon Crest, Palm Desert featured in Architectural Digest, Spring 1964.



72550 Pitahaya, (1962)