



Steven Ehrlich Houses

By Steven Ehrlich

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Residential design forms the core of Steven Ehrlich's award-winning architectural practice. Sixteen houses are presented here, designs characterized by the fusion of powerful modernist forms with the cultural, climatic, and contextual particulars of place.

Ehrlich spent six years living, teaching, traveling, and studying indigenous vernacular architecture in North and West Africa. During that time he was immersed in the visceral power and raw beauty of “Architecture Without Architects” and dazzled by settings like the luminous Zaria Mosque in Nigeria, the textured hill towns of Tunisia, the maze-like souks of Fez, the protected and intimate courtyard houses of Marrakesh, the gravity-defying raised forts of Ghana, and the interconnected desert cities of Algeria.

At the same time Ehrlich had a deep commitment to modernism, with its focus on minimalism, honesty in materials, and rooted connection to the land. Over a thirty-year career he has brought these two strands together in the houses he has designed in the desert landscape of Southern California and the Southwest. There are commonalities in these houses—generous volumes, visual clarity, large windows, interlocking rooms, protected courtyards, structural honesty, richly textured materials, and a connection to nature—but each home is a new beginning, a chance to learn and to create a spatial experience.

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