



# SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

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## EPISODE SHOW NOTES

**Episode Title:** Eichler Homes

**Episode # & Date:** Episode #20 – March 12, 2020

**About this Episode:** California Modern architecture permeates San Mateo with the largest contiguous development of Eichler homes—including the experimental X-100 steel house.

**Episode Web Page:** <https://sanmateofocus.com/eichler-homes/>

## EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

I'm Judy Gordon, and *this* is San Mateo Focus.

It's almost impossible to talk about the Highlands neighborhood in San Mateo without mentioning Joseph Eichler. After all, the Highlands development is composed of roughly 700 single story Eichler homes, with a handful of original two story Eichlers. This makes it the nation's largest contiguous collection of Eichlers. It's also the home of the famous X-100, the steel house of the future designed by A. Quincy Jones and built by Eichler in 1956. These homes are remarkable because they were designed by a select group of world-renowned architects. As the builder, Eichler worked closely with the architects and this collaboration resulted in a post war period style that was fresh, modern, and not at all mainstream. It's notable today that Joseph Eichler and the architects built the homes for real people - ordinary families who were looking for a different and better way of life. In their own right, the first Eichler customers were pioneers who put their hard-earned savings into something new and different. People who lovingly restore Eichlers today in the Highlands continue to be curious, creative, and unconventional.

Eichlers are a big deal in the Highlands, but it's not the only reason that people choose to live in the neighborhood. There are just three entry points in and out of the neighborhood, so it's not normally discovered by chance. Many of the homes feature beautiful views of the Bay area and surrounding hills. Living with nature is just a way of life in the community. Deer gaze in the open fields, hawks circle above, and there have been sightings of bald eagles and mountain lions. The community is served by the popular Highlands Recreation Center, which offers childcare service, recreational and educational programs, a playground, tennis courts, and a year-round swimming pool. Highlands Elementary school is well respected and within walking distance to most of the neighborhood. There is a vibrant neighborhood community that has continued over the years.

The inspiration for Joseph Eichler, that led to a new way of living for thousands in Northern California, came from the short time that he was a tenant in the Bazett House, the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house in Hillsborough. The Bazett House was built in 1939 for Sidney Bazett and Eichler lived in it from the early 1940s until 1945. It was the memory of his time in this home, with its open floor plan, use of natural materials, and light filled spaces that helped to create the easy indoor-outdoor style that has come to be known as *California Modern*. Over the next 20 years of his life, Eichler's company built about 11,000 homes, and they remain in high demand for their uncompromising mid-century design and the enduring quality of their construction. Large panes of floor to ceiling glass, post and



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beam construction, radiant floors, and central courtyards and atriums are some of the innovations developed by the architects and built by Eichler.

A tight community built around a rec center, an elementary school, and pride of owning an Eichler seems like the perfect recipe for a different type of school fundraiser. The Eichler Home Tour, which benefits Highlands Elementary will be celebrating its 5th weekend event in October of 2020, and I was invited by Jim Palmer, who is the Home Tour Team lead to visit his beautiful Eichler home in late afternoon to learn more about the event. As Jim writes in the brochure for the 2017 tour: “There is something magical about an Eichler at night. To get the full experience, you have to step into the backyard and turn your gaze back towards the house to view it through the signature floor to ceiling glass. From outside, you can see everything at once, the posts and beams, the hanging globe lights, the glowing spaces where friends and family members gather.”

The 2020 Eichler home tour will be held on October 3rd and 4th this year, and tickets will go on sale in May. The event sold out in 2017, when there were 11 homes available to tour. People come from out of the United States to attend, and from all over the Bay Area and California. They come to the event to get design inspiration because they have an Eichler, are curious about Eichlers, or want to incorporate some of the design elements into their own home. It’s a chance for the sponsors to showcase their work and it’s fun for the homeowners to show off their homes and share ideas and answer questions. The Home Tour team is in the process of choosing neighborhood homes for this year, but the X-100 will for sure be a part of the event. The homes on the tour show a variety of options for remodeled Eichlers, including homes that were updated on a more modest budget. Individual ticket prices are \$60, and that includes a high end brochure of the homes on tour. They’re working on the October tour now so, *Here’s the Deal*: They’re accepting sponsors and potential homes to tour. Go to the episode page at [sanmateofocus.com](http://sanmateofocus.com) for more information.

Okay, that’s all the time we have for this episode. Have a great week. Thanks to Jack Radsliff for the original music to this podcast. If you’d like more information about our sponsor or the topics in today’s episode, go to [sanmateofocus.com](http://sanmateofocus.com).

## HELPFUL LINKS:

[Video Newsreel: X-100 House](#)

[Website: Eichler Home Tour](#)

[Wikipedia: San Mateo Highlands](#)

[Website: Eichler Network](#)

[Instagram: Eichler Home Tour](#)

[Facebook: Eichler Home Tour](#)

[Website: Eichler Homes for Sale](#)

[Website: Eichler X-100 House of Steel](#)

[Documentary: People in Glass Houses](#)

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Email: [info@sanmateofocus.com](mailto:info@sanmateofocus.com)

Host & Founder: Judy Gordon

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