

# Tustin Preservation Conservancy

*Working to make yesterday's resources  
part of tomorrow's history.*

## Midcentury Architecture in Tustin

Tucked ever so neatly into two neighborhoods in Tustin, lies the legacy of architect Cliff May. Celebrated as a building designer and the Father of the Ranch Home, May designed classic midcentury gems.

Born in San Diego, Cliff May was greatly influenced by the Spanish Rancho. The open interior spaces and high ceilings of this uniquely California architectural style allowed for cool breezes and plenty of space for family gatherings. The Rancho affected Cliff May's style so much that he is credited with inventing the great room concept.

May began designing furniture in the 1920's, and then quickly moved to home design by 1930. Influenced by the modernist movement in the early 1950's, May designed modern homes throughout Southern California and beyond. Floor plans featured the concept of indoor/outdoor living where clerestory windows, tongue and groove wood ceilings and outrigger beams were just a few of the architectural elements within the hip, modern homes. 60 years later the designs are as fresh and on trend today as the day they were built.

Our city is fortunate to have two Cliff May designed neighborhoods. The largest enclave is located near the corner of Red Hill Blvd. and Irvine Blvd., and is considered to be one of the first housing tracts in Tustin. "At the time, the corner of Irvine and Red Hill was a 4 way stop", says Cliff May homeowner Stephen Meade. "The neighborhood also has a rare super-sized 3 bedroom model which has an atrium as well." The other neighborhood, located near El Camino and Browning, has just 19 homes. It is believed that the two neighborhoods were built by different building contractors.



Originally priced between \$13,500-\$16,500, the homes were small by today's standards but big on style and innovation. They came prefabricated from May's company and were built on site by a local building contractor. In fact, May collaborated with such notable builders as Ross Cortese, the creator of the Rossmoor communities.

The Cliff May neighborhoods have seen revitalization over the last few years and are highly sought after by mid-century enthusiasts. The timeless architecture of these (continued on page 2)

### Tustin Art Walk and Wine Tasting

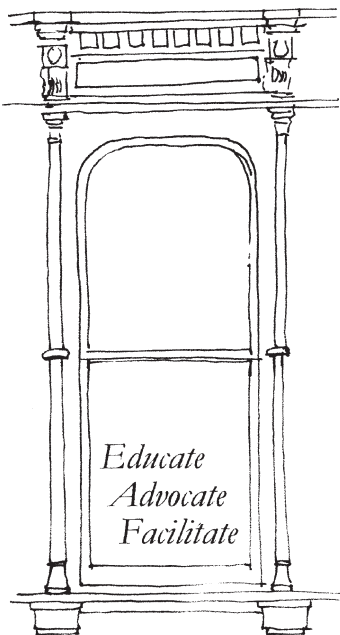
Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 18th for the annual Tustin Art Walk. The Conservancy will once again be holding its wine tasting but at a new location. Thanks to John Moore, we'll be at the Black Marlin Fish House in the old Tustin Garage enjoying a variety of wines, delicious snacks and live music. John has invited us into his newly opened restaurant and the Conservancy is delighted. Tickets will be \$10 for 5 tastes of wine. Be sure to bring your ID and join us from 12 noon until 4 PM at the Black Marlin, 560 El Camino at Sixth St. All proceeds benefit the Tustin Preservation Conservancy. (See page 3 for Old Town Tustin Bus Tour times)

**Tustin Preservation  
Conservancy**

350 South B Street  
Old Town Tustin  
California 92780  
(714) 731-2380

Visit our Web Site at  
[www.tustsinconservancy.org](http://www.tustsinconservancy.org)

Email us at  
[preservetustin@yahoo.com](mailto:preservetustin@yahoo.com)



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modernist ranch homes, combined with the timely preservation by proud homeowners, ensures that these homes will continue to be part of the Cliff May legacy. Architectural aficionados and midcentury modern enthusiasts alike wait patiently for Cliff May designed homes to come on the market. And, when they do, they go fast.

“I was not actively looking for a house when I found this one,” says Stephen Meade, a Cliff May Homeowner since 2005, and incoming President of the Pacific West Association of Realtors. “We based our decision on the esthetics of the home. But now, the interior is what we really love about the house.”

The prefabricated homes made by May’s company allowed him to incorporate some of the innovative features normally found in large, expensive homes, to more modest and affordable ranch homes. One of the homes’ unique features is the interchangeable panels that can be moved by the homeowner. This allowed for a custom look when the homes were being built. If the homeowner grew tired of the floor plan or needed to move a door, the panels allowed for this customization.

May’s designs incorporated such attention to detail as the position of walls and windows to allow for sun and shade, today considered to be “green designs”. Dry wall was used for the interior walls when other builders were still using board and plaster. This was unheard of at the time. The redwood board and batten exteriors were designed to last. And they have.

Over his life time, Cliff May never stopped creating inventive residential design. Over the decades those innovations have turned into art. And Tustin homeowners are happy to live in it.

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Drive out the Santa Ana Freeway to Ball Road in Anaheim and turn right. Or stay on Freeway thru Santa Ana past Tustin to Redhill Ave. just past Tustin High School. Turn left out Redhill to Homes at Redhill and Irvine Ave.

Phone Kimberly 2-3483 for information.

*(This article was researched and written by new North Tustin resident Lisa Harding. Lisa has been actively involved with the Palm Springs Historical Society and is an admirer of midcentury architecture.)*



## Our New Web Site!

Opening soon the new web site for Tustin Preservation Conservancy at [www.tustinconservancy.org](http://www.tustinconservancy.org). We have great new photos and old photos, so click on and take a look.

## Conservancy Honors its Donors

The Conservancy Board of Directors will be returning the favor to its donors by treating them to a picnic at the iconic McCharles House this month. Invitations are out to our generous supporters to enjoy complimentary hamburgers and grilled brats with all the trimmings in the warmth of this lovely historic setting. We hope you're on our donor list and will be there to visit with old friends and new among people who support the Conservancy goals to preserve and protect historic Tustin!

### Old Town Tustin Bus Tour Times

Don't miss the Conservancy guided Old Town Tustin bus tours available during the Art Walk on October 18th. Tours run at 9:30, 11:00, 1:00 and 3:00. They are free, but tickets must be picked up the day of the Art Walk at the Tustin Historical Museum.



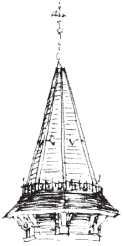
## New Openings in Old Town Tustin

It's very exciting to have new shops and eateries opening in our commercial center. In the former Acorn Naturalist building at 155 El Camino, is Blondies, moved from across First Street into this iconic building. Blondies carries "cost-effective clothes" in a range of women's sizes. Their clothing lines are from all over the world.



The El Camino Cafe

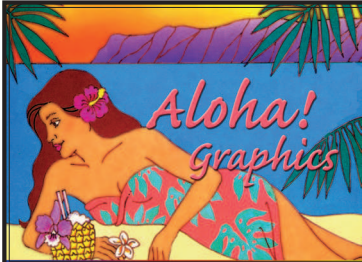
Just down the street at 194 El Camino in a brand new building, we welcome the El Camino Grill, a Mexican café. You'll find members of the Del Rio family busily preparing a wide range of familiar and unique Mexican dishes, made to your order. All of their foods have roots in recipes that have been passed from generation to generation. They offer specialties such as huevos rancheros, chilaquiles, tacos, burritos, salads, and their famous flan. You will find several tables inside as well as patio tables for those who enjoy dining outside. Drop in for breakfast or lunch and try their delicious offerings. Take a look at the ad on page 4 for a special discount coupon!



**Tustin Preservation Conservancy**

350 South B Street  
Old Town Tustin,  
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Fall, 2014



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