

Luxury Living



Narendra Patel

was done, but realize we need to grow out of it and beyond," Patel says. "We needed to create a project that would be appropriate for today and the future, and not dwell in the past. We did not want to just copy mid-century design, but look at those architects and ask 'What would they do today?'"

The community has earned Gold Nugget Awards and national attention, because it gives buyers a choice in architecture beyond Spanish, Mediterranean and Mid-Century. Alta was created to fill that gap. Each of the three base models has an alternate design, so there are actually six floorplans, plus buyers can add or deduct options.

Alta homes range from 2,700 to 4,700 square feet on lots ranging from 13,500 to 23,075 square feet. They include a minimum of three bedroom, 3.5 baths and a two-car garage, with options for up to six bedrooms, 6.5 baths, a five-car garage, covered outdoor living areas, a chef's kitchen, clerestory windows and spa bathrooms.

Other options include attached or detached guest casitas and sliding doors that blur the boundaries between indoors and outdoors.

And the "green" features were a given.

Patel stood on the site before designing the homes and determined that no home would block another, and all would take advantage of the view, have protective overhangs and be positioned to use solar energy and "smart" building materials.

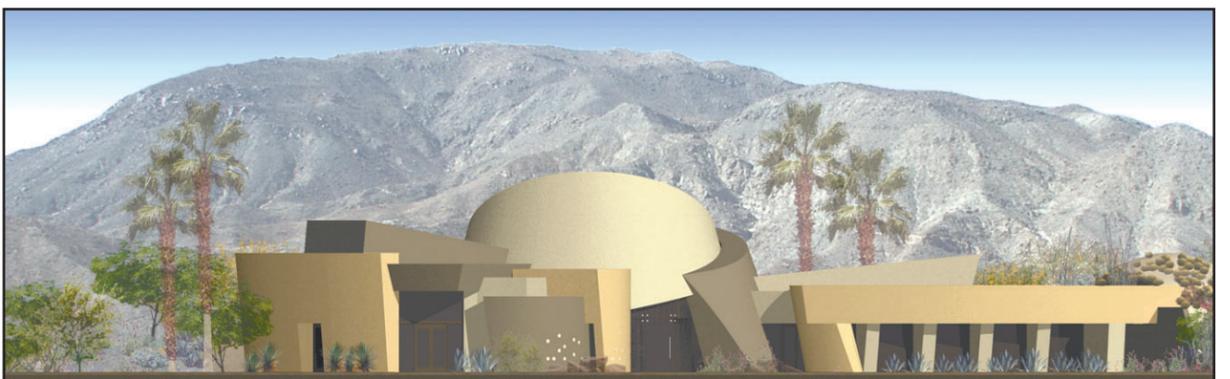
Streets at Alta are named after the area's pioneering architects: Cody Court, Neutra Street, Lautner Lane, Wexler Way and Patel Place.

Patel remembers standing on the street named for him and seeing his homes on both sides. "It was humbling to see this block of my work. It turned out better than I thought it would."

Desert inspiration

While working on his master's of architecture degree at the University of Toronto, Patel knew he wanted to settle in California.

One of the firms that responded to his resumé was in Palm Springs. "I'd never heard of it," he says, "but I thought it would be an adventure to go someplace different." Since arriving in 1981, he's never left. "The desert is an inspiring place to be because of the mountains and the landscape, like the shape



Top: Patel's Mayland Seaside Hotel in Guangzhou, China is expected to be the most energy-efficient five-star hotel ever built. Middle: The Henderson Community Building in Palm Desert illustrates Patel's belief that architecture should respond to its location. Above: Plan B at Alta has an indoor/outdoor bar, seating clusters in the living and family rooms. Residents and guests connect through the kitchen to the covered outdoor living areas.

of the rock outcroppings," Patel comments. "And every day you wake up and there's sunshine."

For a lot of projects, Patel's inspiration comes from natural geometry, since there are no squares or rectangles in nature. He takes inspiration from organic shapes, flowers, and yes, shells.

"The nautilus, to me, it's intriguing. It's been there for thousands of years and still exists. You can slice the shell in half and see the curves. I've always been fascinated with the shape and did research and found that from the earliest time, someone was tak-

ing inspiration from this."

One of the most notable was Leonardo da Vinci. "If you study his work and philosophy, you see that he dissected the nautilus and derived geometric formulas know as The Golden Proportion.

"So I try to keep it organic, rather than be confined with geometric principles, Patel says. "My philosophy is 'Let it go and let it flow.' And this can be seen in all our projects; you see the spirit of it in our inside spaces." **CD**