



TOURS . EVENTS . MODERNISM

The construction of La Luz, a community of 96 adobe structures on Albuquerque's westside, in 1968 marked the start of internationally recognized architect Antoine Predock's career.

Evidence to its lasting celebration, there is much that has already been said about La Luz in the 50 years since construction commenced. In this special La Luz newsletter, we'll provide you with the resources to see those sources yourself and offer a perspective from inside the community's walls.

Ethan Aronson, Director of Guest Experience

A LOOK INSIDE ONE OF THE FIRST UNITS BUILT



We'd like to extend our thanks to the current owners of one of the first units to be constructed at La Luz, Terry and Dan, who allowed us to photograph their home for this article.

Dan and Terry came to La Luz on a 'looking' trip late last year knowing nothing of the property's provenance and fell in love with the vistas framed by its vast windows, the home's open floor plan, and the way interior and

exterior spaces flowed seamlessly into one another. Their approach to decorating the space is to highlight their art collection while maintaining an inviting environment without gallery sterility. A feeling of comfort and style is especially evident in the living room and bedroom spaces, where mid-century furnishings mix with contemporary pieces selected by Terry. The wood furnishings look especially warm juxtaposed against the creamy ivory walls, which glow with the reflection of sunlight streaming through the windows. Color variations of the stucco exteriors are also used to bounce light into the living space.

Their model is the same to have been featured in photographs in Antoine Predock's 1969 **New Mexico Architecture** article. Two of our photos below evidence how the unit has changed since construction, as we intentionally restaged the angles from the 1969 article.

As they establish themselves in Albuquerque, Dan was initially surprised by how much privacy their townhome affords them; privacy was one of Predock's goals in the design. But what was immediately apparent to the new residents was the pride that homeowners have in La Luz's homes and legacy. Warmly welcomed by their neighbors into the community, Terry and Dan look forward to enjoying their new life there.



Elements of Southwest and Pacific Northwestern art are interspersed along with vintage and contemporary furniture in the living room. The wooden beams on the ceiling are original to the space, as are the windows, which the homeowners hope to soon replace with more energy efficient panes.



The north exterior courtyard of the unit, with painstakingly restored wood beams, a recent renovation project by the unit's new owners. Dan would like to return the cant to the slats, as they were originally installed at an angle to allow for light in the winter months and shade in the summer sun.



Looking southeast towards downtown and on to the Manzano mountain range. Mid-century wooden furniture is beautifully contrasted against the softly illuminated walls of the master suite.



Predock's *New Mexico Architecture* article emphasized the visual continuity between interior and exterior living space through the homes' large sliding glass doors, a feature not found in traditional New Mexican buildings.



RESOURCES

In addition to the 1969 **New Mexico Architecture** article, more can be learned about La Luz from these sources:

- La Luz was hailed as a "reassuring return to regionalism after decades of placeless International-style architecture" in this 1974 issue of



A CHILDHOOD AT LA LUZ

Photo by Rita Aronson. Subject, Ethan Aronson. Cattail placed in barbecue to achieve 'cigar' effect. No nicotine inhaled.

My grandparents have lived at La Luz since the early 1980's. As a child visiting them, it always seemed far away from the city. Even as Albuquerque grew up around it, the harmony of the design and natural landscape

Progressive Architecture. See page 60.

- A 2015 **case-study of the property** completed by UNM School of Architecture and Planning student Mhd Alaa Eddin Arar.
- The video below, produced by the UNM Foundation in 2018.



set it apart from my home neighborhood of Altura Park. I vividly remember taking long walks across the mesa and along the river, plodding through quicksand, quietly spying on toads, and pretending the end of cattails were cigars. It's a wonder I didn't develop a smoking habit.

The serenity that Predock's design communicates has always appealed to me. I learned to swim at its pool, a place I still visit when I'm desperate to disconnect. The view of the mountains from its swaying hammock is incomparable. The beauty of La Luz as a planned community is in its harmonious design, each element functioning as part of a larger whole, creating visual cohesion and a draw to engage with all its friendly residents, whether human or amphibian.



The concrete pool facility at the La Luz community pool. The structure's angular concrete roof is currently planted with native vegetation. The pool opened in 1969; a photo of the area under construction can be seen at the **La Luz Landowners Association**. The pool area is accessible by residents and their guests only.



Looking towards the pool over the roof of the building, the only evidence of it is the metal safety railing. The structure is nestled into the sloping landscape to not obscure the views of any residents looking out their windows to its west. Originally, the roof of the structure was planted with grass, but within the last decade the decision was made to xeriscape the roof to match the desert surrounds.



UPCOMING EVENTS

50 YEARS OF LA LUZ: A CONVERSATION WITH ANTOINE PREDOCK & CHRISTOPHER MEAD

If you'd like to learn even more, there is a rare opportunity to do so. A lecture, focused on the development of the La Luz community and featuring architect Antoine Predock and architecture and art history professor Christopher Mead, is being sponsored by the *New Mexico Architectural Foundation*. The free event will take place on Saturday, **October 6th from 10:30 AM until noon** at the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County **Main Library**. Professor Emeritus Christopher Mead is the author of two books on the architecture of Antoine Predock.



Photo by Gene Aronson.

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