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IN THE BUSINESS OF SELLING RESIDENCES BY MODERN MASTERS, DESIGN INTEGRITY SHOULD BE PART OF THE EQUATION.

Source: ARCHITECT Magazine
Publication date: 2008-09-01

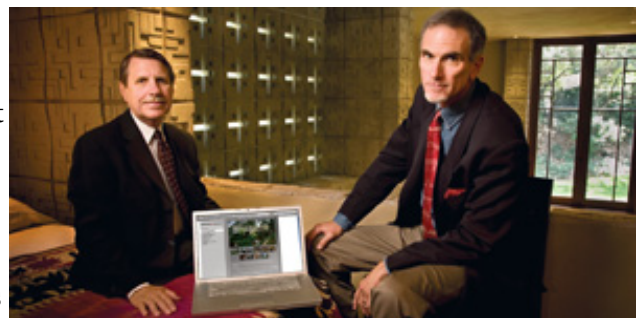
By Gideon Fink Shapiro

Compared with a multimillion-dollar painting by Andy Warhol or Mark Rothko, a house by a modern architectural master like Richard Neutra has more functional value. After all, you can live in it. But if you want to preserve its artistic and financial value, can you redo the kitchen? Most real estate people might assume new amenities would fetch a higher price. But Mossler & Doe co-founder Crosby Doe, who runs architectureforsale.com, believes otherwise. "It takes courage to keep the 1950s Thermador ovens," says the veteran Los Angeles broker and preservationist, who recently helped the owners of Neutra's Barsha House (1938) source original bathroom hardware.

Recent efforts to sell residences designed by prominent modern architects have provided a new impetus for conservation, in Doe's estimation. "As values rise," he predicts, "people will stop tearing down." Thus authentic preservation serves the best interests of both historical memory and financial investment. Doe envisions a globalized architecture market resulting in the celebration of good design. For nine years, he has increased the visibility of architecturally significant residences through Architecture for Sale, which lists Mossler & Doe properties as well as houses represented by others.

Part blog, part billboard, and part gallery, the site accepts listings from all over the world. Doe and Erik Lerner, a senior Mossler & Doe agent, screen submissions for the merit of the architecture and the photography, then draft or edit a curatorial description. Having spent 15 years practicing architecture, Lerner believes his work as a broker of historic modern homes allows him to better serve the profession. "I practice architecture by selling it," he says. "The real estate business can benefit from the expertise of a professional architect."

The site adds a handful of new properties each month. Recent listings include Frank Lloyd Wright's 1923 cast-concrete-block Millard House, known as La Miniatura, which will set you back a cool \$7.7 million, and John Lautner's 1949 Schaffer Residence, a relative bargain at \$1.8 million. Aspiring to preservation as well as publicity, Architecture for Sale reformulates the terms of real estate appraisal by borrowing a law from the art world: authenticity equals value.



Michael Darter

Crosby Doe (left) and Erik Lerner

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