



Spectacular Vernacular House Tour

By Ruthann Lehrer

Five vintage vernacular homes throughout Santa Monica will be featured in our annual architectural tour on Sunday, September 18 from 1-5 pm. These homes, modified rather than demolished, exemplify how preservation can be done alongside updating a residence for modern living. The approaches in restoration and renovation vary across the homes from major changes that juxtapose contemporary architecture while preserving historic elements, to seamless additions inspired by the original historic style. The architectural styles of the homes include Victorian, Spanish Colonial Revival and Craftsman.

The older Victorian house on the tour dates from the 19th century. From its origins as a tiny one-room cottage, the house was expanded and transformed over many decades. In 2012, new



The 1924 Boldt-Garcetti house

Photo by Joshua White

owners undertook major preservation work, with additions for new living space that skillfully reveal the different eras throughout its evolution.

The second Victorian on the tour was brought back to life by its loving owners, former Landmarks Commissioner and now Planning Commissioner Nina Fresco and her husband Rob. Nina's interest in reusing vin-

tage house parts is showcased in her home, which is now a unique oasis in Ocean Park.

The Craftsman home in Sunset Park celebrates its centennial this year. It also reflects the dedication of new owners, who have done major work to restore and expand this house for their family of four.

HOUSE TOUR *continues on page 3*

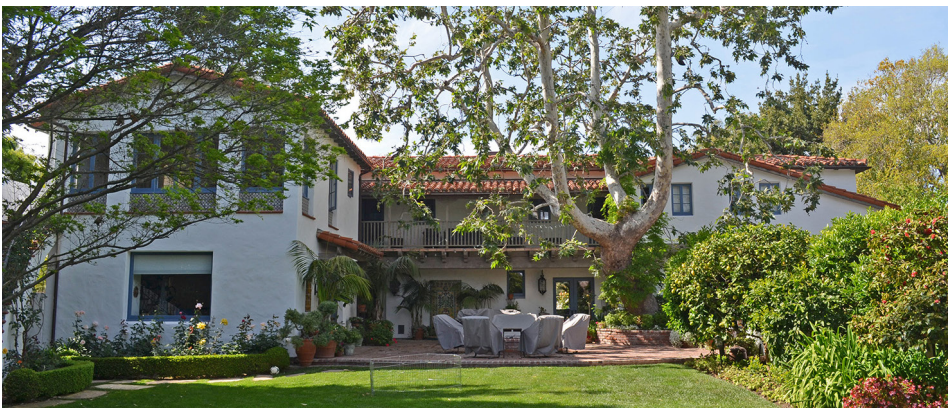


Photo by Dwight Flowers

Fall Salon at Byers House

By Ruthann Lehrer

A stunning home overlooking Santa Monica Canyon is the site of the Conservancy's annual Salon fundraiser on Sunday, October 23, from 3 – 5 PM. The Armstrong/Cobb house on San Vicente Boulevard was designed by renowned local architect John Byers and constructed in 1926. It was built for Donald Armstrong and altered in 1934 for Irvin S. Cobb. Cobb wrote more than 60 books and 300 short stories. Some of his works were adapted for si-

lent movies. With the advent of sound, more of his stories were adapted for the screen, including "The Woman Accused" (1933), featuring young Cary Grant.

In the 1930s, actress Bette Davis lived there, and photos of her are displayed in the living room of the house now owned by Susan

BYERS HOUSE *continues on page 5*

Shotgun House Receives Preservation Design Award

The rehabilitation of the Shotgun House as the Preservation Resource Center will be among projects from across the state to be honored at the California Preservation Foundation's 33rd Annual Preservation Design Awards. The Foundation is the only statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of California's diverse cultural and architectural heritage. The awards will be presented at a gala dinner and awards ceremony at the Richard Neutra-designed Arboretum on the campus of Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove on September 29.

The Preservation Design Awards recognize the accomplishments of professionals, nonprofit organizations and government agencies and others for outstanding examples of preservation, restoration,

SHOTGUN HOUSE *continues on page 2*

Five Ways to Research Your Property's History, p. 5

OUR MISSION

The Santa Monica Conservancy is the leading voice for preserving our historic places. We promote understanding of the cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits of historic preservation through education, assistance and advocacy.

JOIN US

The Santa Monica Conservancy exists because of the involvement and generosity of people like you. Become a member today and strengthen our voice for preserving Santa Monica's architectural and cultural heritage.

Sign up on page 7

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This newsletter is supported in part by a grant from the City of Santa Monica and the Santa Monica Arts Commission.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Preservation Resource Center recently completed its first six months of operation and it's a good opportunity to look back on what we have accomplished.

In addition to those who visit us during our scheduled three days a week, we have hosted scores of visitors during community events like COAST Open Streets and the Main Street 4th of July Parade. Altogether, nearly 1,000 visitors have signed our guest book since the Center opened in January. About half come from Santa Monica; the rest are from other parts of California, numerous other states, and even Germany, Australia, and the UK. One visitor, former resident Karen Noonan, told us about her experience living in our Shotgun House in the 1960s. You can read about her visit and her memories of the Shotgun House on page 4.

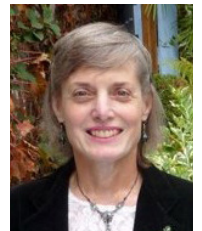
A primary goal of the Center is to assist property owners and others with preservation-related inquiries. Since January, we have assisted at least five homeowners who want to understand the requirements for designation of their properties. Two of these, owners of intact Craftsman-style homes built before 1920, are now preparing applications – a clear example of the value of having a readily accessible place where such assistance is offered.

News of an entirely different kind of success for the Preservation Resource Center arrived recently when we were notified that the rehabilitation of the Shotgun House will be recognized by the California Preservation Foundation at its 33rd Annual Preservation Awards ceremonies this fall. Typically 10-20 projects from across the state are honored in various preservation-related categories. Many of you who are reading this column contributed to this success, and we are deeply grateful for your help and support. Thank you!

Additionally, I'd like to recognize our Downtown Walking Tour docents, led by Kay Pattison and Margi Falk, who created a special tour of Ocean Avenue for participants in COAST and provided tours for nearly 100 residents and City planning staff interested in learning more about the history and architecture of downtown in preparation for a Downtown Community Plan workshop on "Preservation and Change." The Downtown Walking Tour was the first of our three popular tour programs offered one or more times a week, and we look forward to celebrating its 10th Anniversary next spring.

A warm thank you to Alice Allen, who coordinated the development of our quarterly newsletters beginning in 2007 and provided administrative support, and is retiring from her responsibilities at the Conservancy. Alice, whom I first met in the USC Historic Preservation summer program, is a long-term volunteer and docent with the Los Angeles Conservancy and will continue her involvement in preservation with them. Robin Tung, who joined us two years ago to manage our online media and member communications, will now include the newsletter in her responsibilities. We are delighted to have her applying her skills as a professional writer and writing coach to all of our external communications.

As always, we are grateful for our members. Together we are protecting Santa Monica's historic places, and we could not do it without you.



Carol

SHOTGUN HOUSE *continued from page 1*

rehabilitation, reconstruction, contextual infill, sustainability, cultural resource studies/reports, craftsmanship/preservation technology, and archeology and interpretive exhibits.

The nomination submitted for the Shotgun House emphasized the extraordinary

community effort across nearly two decades that made its adaptive reuse possible. It also highlights the role of such houses in the early development of Ocean Park and the extensive research and work necessary to rehabilitate it according to the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

Michael Burton

By Kevin Herrera



Like an aggressive poker player with a great hand, Michael Burton is going all in. In addition to serving as a docent for the Santa Monica Conservancy, leading walking tours of Downtown Santa Monica and

the Annenberg Community Beach House, Burton, 64, is also a researcher for the Santa Monica History Museum.

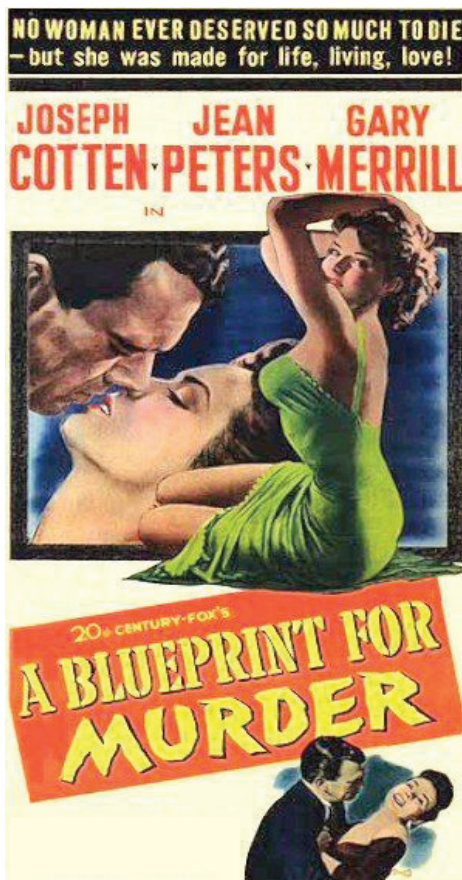
“I love the rich history of Santa Monica — and of course the beautiful beach and the ocean,” he said.

“I became affiliated with the Conservancy three years ago. When I retired I looked for volunteer opportunities on the Internet and discovered the Conservancy,” said Burton, who lives in Brentwood with his best friend and wife of 43 years, Gail. “I decided to give it a go and committed to six Saturdays of training [at the Annenberg Community

Beach House]. I am so thankful I did because I enjoy being a docent very much.”

Burton spent 21 years as an executive at Bank of America. Now he enjoys playing tennis, racquetball and golf, as well as traveling. He’s also a lover of classic rock and the theatre.

“I have met so many wonderful people at the Conservancy who have enriched my knowledge of the history of this beautiful city,” Burton said. Many tour-goers have been enriched by his acquaintance as well, seeking out his upcoming scheduled tours after meeting him.



Film Screening Features the Former Marion Davies Estate

By Elaine Cohen

Approximately 50 people attended a special screening of the 1953 noir thriller movie, “Blueprint for Murder,” at the Ocean Park Library in July. Filmed at the Guest House at the Annenberg Community Beach House, as well as the original mansion of Marion Davies that was demolished in 1957, the film starred Joseph Cotten and Jean Peters.

The screening came about as a result of the suggestion of Richard Orton, and was held in conjunction with Conservancy docents who volunteer at the Annenberg Community Beach House. The film features the house furnished as the home of a wealthy and cunning widow and her stepson, and was a treat for the audience. A special thank you to Elaine Cohen, Libby Pachares, Kay Pattison, Richard Orton and Ocean Park Library branch manager Karen Reitz for helping to organize the event. We hope this will be the beginning of other collaborations in the community.



Michael Burton, Audree Fowler, Maureen Murphy, Patricia Godon-Tann.

Conservancy Docents Visit Shirley Temple Exhibit

by Libby Pachares

Conservancy docents were treated to a private tour of a special exhibit, “Shirley Temple: Santa Monica’s Biggest Little Star,” at the Santa Monica History Museum. Michael Burton, a docent at both the Santa Monica History Museum and the Santa Monica Conservancy, led the tour twice in June.

Shirley Temple was a child film star, born in Santa Monica in 1928. Her abundant talents as a singer, dancer, and actress made her a quick success in Hollywood. Once named “Little Miss Miracle” by President Franklin D. Roosevelt for her ability to bring joy to the lives of millions, her films have been said to uplift the spirits of a nation in the midst of the Great Depression. During her childhood, Temple lived in Spanish-style bungalows on 19th and 24th Streets.

The exhibit included original movie costumes and posters, dolls, personal photos, correspondence and memorabilia.

HOUSE TOUR *continued from page 1*

One of the two Spanish Revival residences boldly interfaces contemporary architecture as an overlay on its modest 1926 structure, achieving a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum rating. Renovations in the second Spanish Revival home are woven into the existing floor plan and connect with a lush and beautiful garden. A Cecil Gale house, it exemplifies the fine craftsmanship and detailing that characterizes the work of this master Santa

Monica designer/builder.

Tickets are \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. Tickets on the day of tour are \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members. Tickets may be purchased online at www.smconservancy.org, or by sending a check by September 13 to P.O. Box 653, Santa Monica, CA 90406. Please indicate the number of tickets you desire and whether you are a Conservancy member, and include your address, email and telephone number.

A Former Resident Returns to the Shotgun House

By Hilda Weiss

“Yes, it looks completely familiar,” Karen Noonan said with tears in her eyes, remembering the house in which she grew up at 2712 2nd Street, long before it was moved and transformed into the Preservation Resource Center

Noonan arrived in Santa Monica this past March to visit her former home after reading an *LA Times* article about the restoration of the house, which a friend had posted on Facebook. “I couldn’t believe it because I was told they were going to tear it down,” said Noonan. But when she saw the original house number she recognized the Preservation Resource Center as her former home.

Noonan noted that when she and her family lived in the house from 1958 to 1969, hers was the only residence in the area that was one-room wide, connecting the living room to a series of two bedrooms and a kitchen, with no doors in between the rooms. But she never really thought about it being different from other houses in the neighborhood. She



Karen Noonan shares her memories.

remembers it as small and cozy, but also big enough for the Girl Scout troop that met there (her mom was the leader), as well as other events. “We always had Thanksgiving at our place,” Noonan added.

Noonan shared her memories with Nina Fresco, board member and de facto historian for the house. She explained that the back door used to be a Dutch door: “You could open the top and let a breeze come in.” The light switches were of the old-fashioned, push

button style, and there was a free-standing gas heater in the living room that had replaced an earlier wood-burning stove. In the kitchen she remembered wallpaper on one wall, the linoleum floor, a built-in pantry and a ceiling that sloped down toward the back of the building, all of which Fresco has captured in an interpretive model of the house.

Noonan also shared what life was like in Santa Monica in the 1960s: trick-or-treating in the neighborhood and skateboarding up and down Main Street. “We made our own skateboards,” she said. Her father was a chef for The Chatham in Westwood and sometimes brought home food from the restaurant. Her mother was “mostly a housewife” although she worked at the cafeteria at Douglas Aircraft. During election time the family set up polling booths in their living room.

“What I remember most,” she said, “[was that] everybody was really friendly. During the summers we always left our doors open. We weren’t afraid. [Everyone] got along very well.” And, choking up, she added, “It was home to me.”



Conservancy Marches in 4th of July Parade

By Kay Pattison

Old Hollywood stars made their appearance at the grand 4th of July parade in Santa Monica when our Annenberg Beach House docents portrayed them in costumes replicating those from the 1930s. Cruising down Main Street in a 1932 Packard Deluxe once owned by Jean Harlow, Cliff Gooding, the current owner of the car, chauffeured Jean Harlow (Carolyn Coughlin-Grimm), William Randolph Hearst (Michael Burton) and Marion Davies

(Robin Venturelli) in the back while Charlie Chaplin (Phyllis Bernard) and Harpo Marx (Kay Pattison) walked alongside, hamming it up for the crowd. Even Spiderman made an appearance (four-year-old Adrian Grayver).

Other Conservancy leaders, docents and members marched alongside the Packard with banners and signs featuring the varied activities of the Conservancy, including the docent-led tours of the Annenberg Community Beach House, Walking Tours of Downtown Santa Monica and the Preservation Resource Center at the Shotgun House.

Parade participants ranged in age from 2 to 82. Thanks to all who participated, who in addition to the “stars,” included: Bernie and Beverly Gray Bienstock along with their grandchildren Adrian and Mila Grayver, Gail Burton, Tom Cleys, Ruthann Lehrer, Carol Lemlein, Fran Lyness, Alec Nedelman, Libby Pachares, Thomasine Rogas along with her grandchildren Kacie and Tyler Carter, and Dolores Sloan. And a special thank you to Cliff Gooding for enlivening our participation in the parade with the Packard.

BYERS HOUSE *continued from page 1*

Disney Lord and Scott Lord. The Lords added a new wing and tiled courtyard in the spirit of Byers' architecture. Handmade touches original to the house abound, such as terra cotta floor tile with designs incised by workmen's fingers.

After working as a Spanish and French teacher at Santa Monica High School, John Byers discovered his talent in architecture while working as a translator between the owner and Mexican craftsmen in constructing an adobe home in Brentwood in 1919. Turning to architecture full-time in 1922, he specialized in adobe construction enhanced by authentic handmade materials such as terra cotta tile, wrought iron, and wood beams. He received his architecture license in 1926, and had a long and successful career using both adobe and wood frame construction, with many celebrities among his clients. His own home was on La Mesa, and his office on 26th Street has been remodeled for restaurant use.

Dr. Ken Breisch, Conservancy board member emeritus, Associate Professor in the School of Architecture at USC and past president of the Society of Architectural Historians, will give a brief talk about John Byers. Join us for delicious refreshments and a wine bar. Don't miss the chance to see the best work of Byers, restored and enhanced by our gracious hosts.

Tickets are \$150 per person for Conservancy members and \$175 for non-members. Reservations are required. Tickets may be purchased at www.smconservancy.org or by sending a check to P.O. Box 653, Santa Monica, CA 90406. Please indicate the number of tickets you desire and whether you are a Conservancy member, and include your address, email and telephone number.

Save the Pier, the Play

By Sherrill Kushner

The struggle by residents to save the Santa Monica Pier from demolition in the 1970s has been dramatized in the play, "Save the Pier," which is being performed again this September.

The play is based on the conflict that arose in 1971 when Santa Monica City Council voted to build a 35-acre island in our bay that would feature a high-rise hotel, a convention center, restaurants and other amenities. The Pier was to be demolished and replaced with a four-lane access bridge.

In "Save the Pier," historian Jim Harris portrays the fight to stop the Council's plans. The play is based on interviews with those who saved the pier, and its intention



is to inspire future activism and advocacy for historic places at risk.

The Conservancy is partnering with producer Carolyn Yost and director Paul Sand to publicize the play. It will be performed in an open-air "theater" at the west end of the pier for three nights, September 23, 24 and 25. Performances are free. Additional information is available at www.facebook.com/SaveTheSMPier.

PeBL Selects the Conservancy

The Professionals Emerging as Business Leaders (PeBL) has selected the Santa Monica Conservancy as one of three nonprofits it will be working with this year. The Conservancy, along with Foundation ThinkAgain and Westside Ballet, will receive support from PeBL, a subcommittee of the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce made up of professionals from diverse industries donating their

skills in philanthropy, networking and communications to strengthen the community.

Chris Kito of the Montana Avenue office of Coldwell Banker Real Estate will be the Conservancy's liaison to the group. PeBL's contributions will include marketing expertise and volunteering at the Conservancy's upcoming Spectacular Vernacular Tour on September 18.

Five Ways to Research Your Property's History

by Sherrill Kushner

Curious about who lived in your house before you? Ever wonder what year your house was built, how much it cost and who the architect was? Every building has a story, and you might be surprised by what you can find out through a number of free, local resources.

The **Santa Monica Public Library** website is a good place to start. Its Imagine Santa Monica database, which can be accessed online at www.digital.smpl.org, allows you to search for photos, maps and newspaper articles that relate to your building.

At the main library's Santa Monica Collection, you can view old telephone directories

(1896 to the present), which might reveal who once lived in your house or building. The Collection also has books and pamphlets that might contain more helpful information.

The **Los Angeles Public Library** has Sanborn Fire Insurance maps online (www.lapl.org) and on microfilm, which provide the outline, size, shape, height, materials and function of individual buildings.

The **LA County Assessor's Office** may also have records that describe features of a building's original construction, both exterior and interior, as well as the original square footage. Its district office in Culver City stores building plans for Santa Monica.

Likewise, the **City of Santa Monica's**

Building and Safety Division has records of permits taken out which will indicate what modifications might have been made through the years. Permit recordings began November 1903, but unfortunately, few earlier than 1922 have survived. Permits give the name of the original owner, architect, builder, cost and sometimes information on construction materials. Be aware that street names have changed over time. The City may also have plans and drawings on file for masonry, concrete, steel or wood frame structures over three stories high built in 1920 and later.

While paid researchers are available to do this work for you, you might enjoy the fun of discovery yourself.

Landmarks Commission Report

By Dolores Sloan, Landmarks Commissioner

Several recent actions in Santa Monica should encourage community organizations and individuals to take a more active role in the historic preservation process. Thanks to a City Council action in June, application filing fees to nominate buildings and sites as Landmarks or Structures of Merit are now waived when nonprofit organizations such as the Santa Monica Conservancy apply. Hopefully this will bring more potentially worthy structures to the attention of the Landmarks Commission for formal consideration.

In addition, members of the community may now go online to recommend consideration of a building, site or natural feature for addition to the city's Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). The Inventory is currently being updated and expanded to include areas and neighborhoods of Santa Monica not previously explored for qualifying structures or sites. Representatives from both the Historic Resources Group and Architectural Resources Group, consultant firms retained for the update, have been meeting with neighborhood associations and other local groups, to explain the Inventory's significance and the method by which a member can request consideration of a structure



Photo by the City of Santa Monica

or site for potential listing. Residents often have "insider" information about structures that the consultants may not be aware of but need. Online forms can be accessed at www.historicsamo.squarespace.com by clicking on Your Historic SaMo. The completed form can be submitted online or mailed directly to the consultants.

The Commission is also considering recommendations for changes and additions to the Landmarks Ordinance, which comes up for review in 2017. Items under discussion include strengthening the Structure of Merit designation, adding Site of Interest as a designation category and adding "socio-economic significance" as a criterion. Additional items under study include changes in time requirements regarding appeals, potential historic districts, and Certificates of Appropriateness regarding demolitions.

An Ostrich Farm in Ocean Park?

It's hard to imagine that at one time Santa Monica had an Ostrich Farm. The farm was in business from 1889 to 1895, located on Hill Street, between Main Street and what was called Lake Street (today's 2nd Street). It covered seven acres, housed 30-40 ostriches, and became a visitor attraction.

Ostriches first arrived in Southern California in 1883 when an Englishman named Charles Sketchley brought 22 birds by boat from South Africa and opened a farm in Anaheim, the first of its kind in the U.S. At that time ostrich feathers were popularly used in women's clothing such as on hats, muffs, and boas and had to be shipped from Africa, making them very costly.

Dr. Sketchley was so successful that a group of investors, including developer Gaylord Wilshire (of Wilshire Boulevard fame), organized the California Ostrich Farming Company in 1885. Sketchley returned to Africa to bring more birds. He started a farm on the Los Feliz rancho in what is now Griffith Park, hoping it would become a major LA attraction. But the location was too remote then and the farm didn't prosper. Ocean Park was chosen because a thriving

tourist center had already been established there.

Another Englishman, Henry Beauchamp, managed the Santa Monica ostrich farm. Fans and ornaments made from the ostriches' feathers were made and sold at the farm. Visitors paid a 25 cent admission fee. It flourished at first but eventually closed down based on a claim that the birds were impossible to raise so close to the ocean.



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Joan Abraham
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2016 FALL PRESERVATION EVENTS

TOUR

Wilshire Miracle Mile Art Deco Walking Tour

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 10:00 AM

Take a step back in time on this walking tour of the iconic Miracle Mile, a street conceived to rival the great boulevards of Europe with its elegance, space, chic shops, and architecture.

Art Deco Society of Los Angeles
310-659-3326

www.adsla.org

TOUR

Via Zurita Sunset Reception and Home Tour

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7 & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Take a special tour of the former home of Gumby's creator, Art Clokey, during a sunset reception on Friday. Enjoy a docent-led tour of unique homes in the neighborhood on Sunday.

Claremont Heritage
909-621-0848

www.claremontheritage.org

CONFERENCE

LA Historic Neighborhoods Conference

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Join more than 200 people in an exchange of ideas about challenges facing LA's diverse neighborhoods and communities, from teardowns and mansionization to energy efficiency in older homes.

Los Angeles Conservancy
(213) 623-2489

www.laconservancy.org

TOUR

Sycamore Grove Walking Tours

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 10:00 AM

Explore the rich and varied architectural and social history of the Sycamore Grove area of Highland Park, one of Los Angeles' oldest neighborhoods.

Highland Park Heritage Trust
(323) 908-4127

www.hpht.org

TOUR

Craftsman Weekend

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11-13

The Weekend will mark a quarter century of honoring the Craftsman movement, featuring house tours of notable Craftsman properties, along with bus and walking tours of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Pasadena Heritage
(626) 441-6333

www.pasadenaheritage.org

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SPECTACULAR VERNACULAR

Tour five vintage vernacular Santa Monica homes in a docent-led architectural tour.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18
1 – 5 pm

Tickets: \$30 members and \$35 non-members

Purchase tickets today
at www.smconservancy.org



Photo by Ruthann Lehrer

ANNUAL FALL SALON

See the best work of architect John Byers and enjoy a tour, elegant hors d’oeuvres and a special talk.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23
3 – 5 pm

Tickets: \$150 members
and \$175 non-members



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

- Historic setting
- Good friends • Good food

Details coming soon

