

MetroABQ Real Estate Newsletter

Including Rio Rancho, Corrales, Placitas, Atrisco Valley, Los Lunas & the East Mountains.

~May~

The Fabulous Spruce Park Centennial Historic Home Tour: Touring Nine Unique Homes Starting From The Roaring 1920's



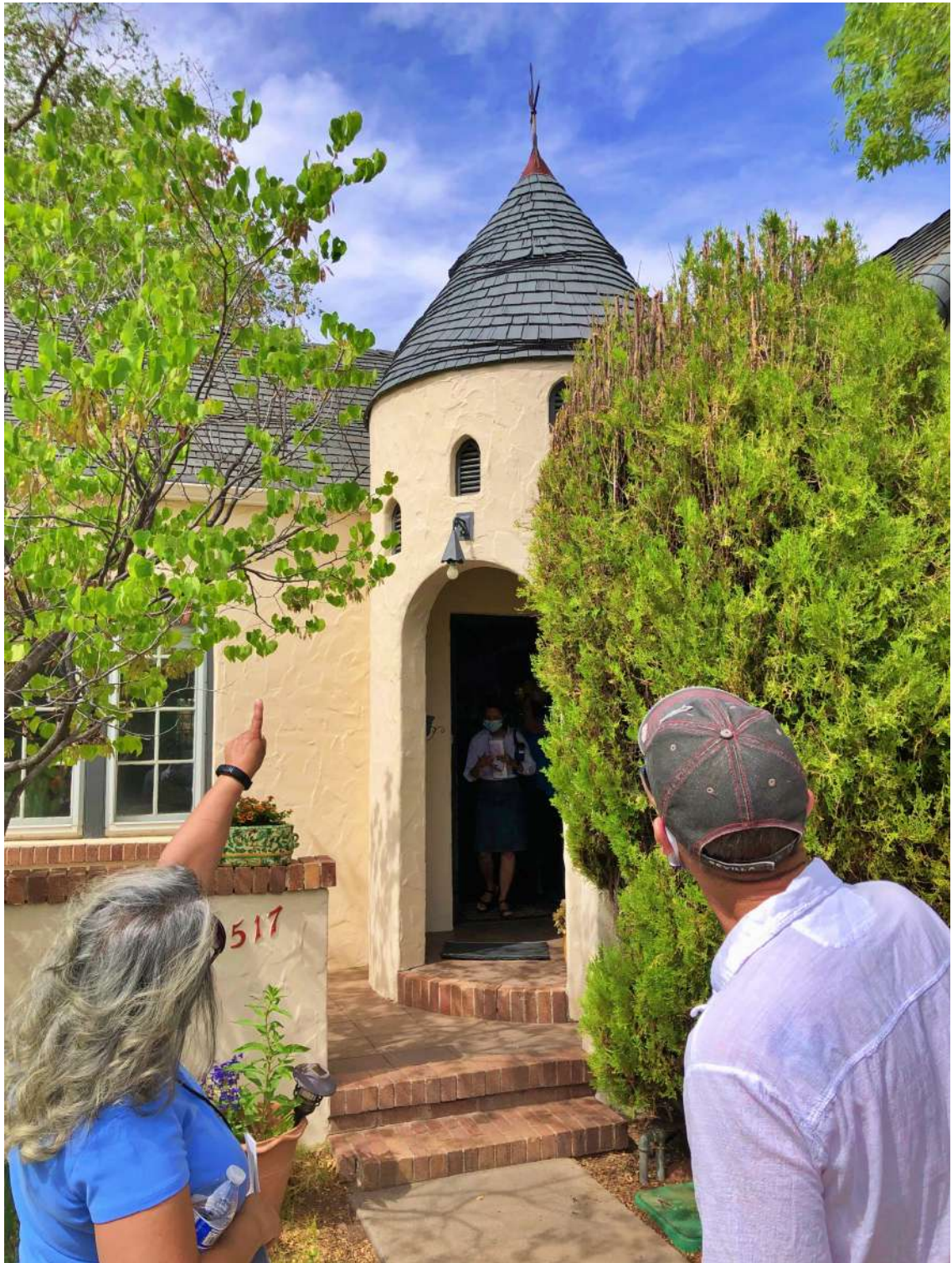
Spruce Park

The Spruce Park neighborhood is one of those places where you can slip away into another time for awhile: enjoy the always eclectic, one-of-a-kind historic homes built from the 1920's onward that make up the hilly neighborhood--with the namesake park in the middle--then come back to reality & continue on with your day...

To celebrate the postage-stamp-sized neighborhoods 100 year birthday, the Spruce Park Neighborhood Association ([SPNA](#)) organized the **Spruce Park Centennial Historic Home Tour**. The list of nine homes was nicely curated, providing an array of architectural treats, including arches, towers, balconies, clay tile roofs, large picture windows & small porthole windows, & brick quoins; there's SW Vernacular style homes, a Gothic Cottage, philanthropist Anna Kaseman's large Pueblo Revival home, & of course [National Historic Register](#) plaques, that sit prominently in front of some of the neighborhood homes.

Above is one of the two-sided ceramic Alvarado Hotel Lion reliefs, found guarding the entryway at one of the homes on the tour. More on the Alvarado Lions later...







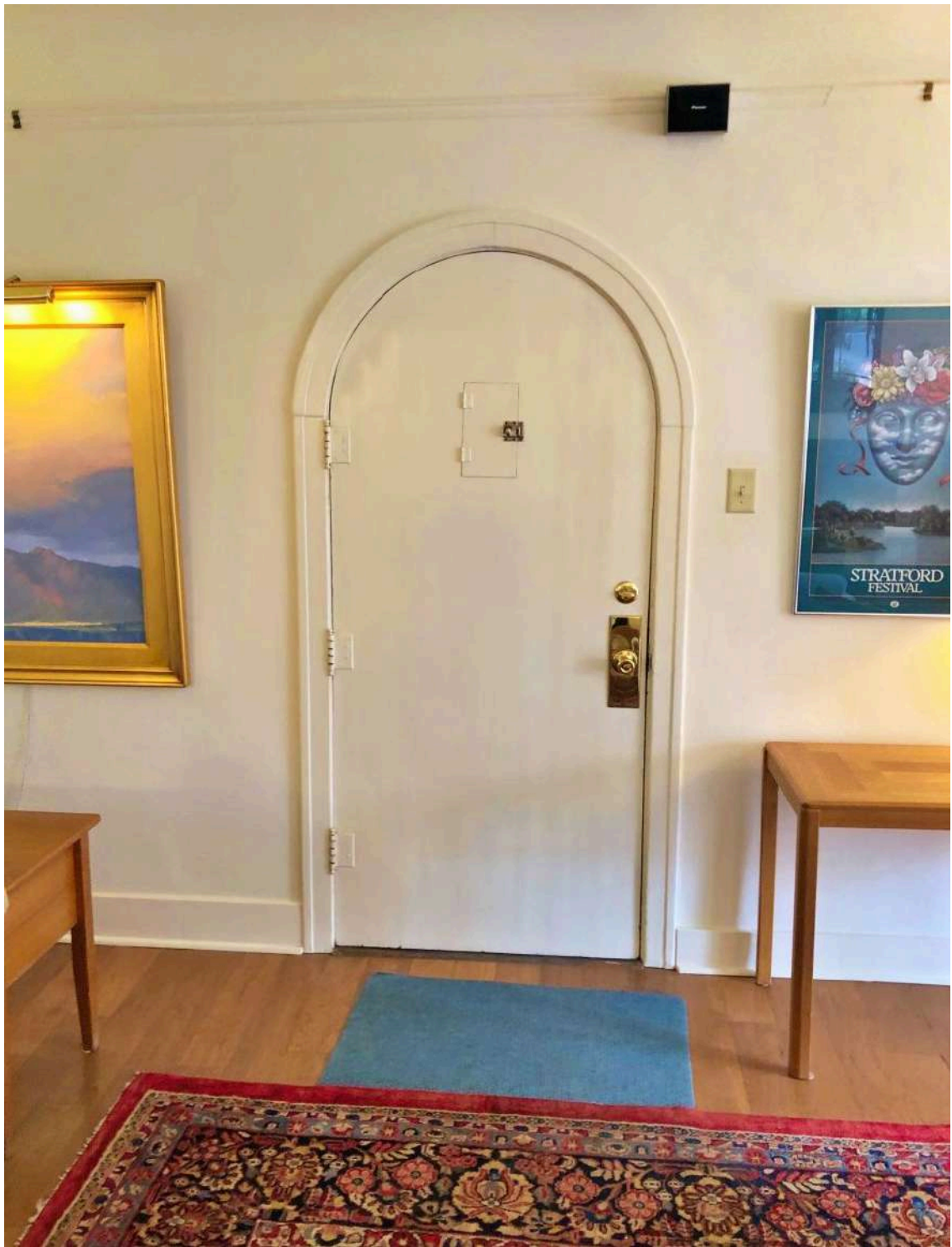
All the homes on the tour had obvious stand-out features that make one want to take a picture; however, there was a no-photography rule. Some homeowners were kind enough to allow for a few captured images, included in this newsletter; all were taken with permission.

Tessier House & Sorority House

I've always wanted to see the inside of one of the [two Medieval-style homes](#) in Spruce Park. This tour happily crossed one of them off the list...Described as a "fanciful Gothic cottage" in the Spruce Park Neighborhood Association brochure, the Tessier House definitely stands out, with its entry tower, undulating roofline with rolled edges & arched doorways. Built in 1929, the story-book Gothic revival style was very popular in the '20s & '30s, but is an extremely rare find in New Mexico.

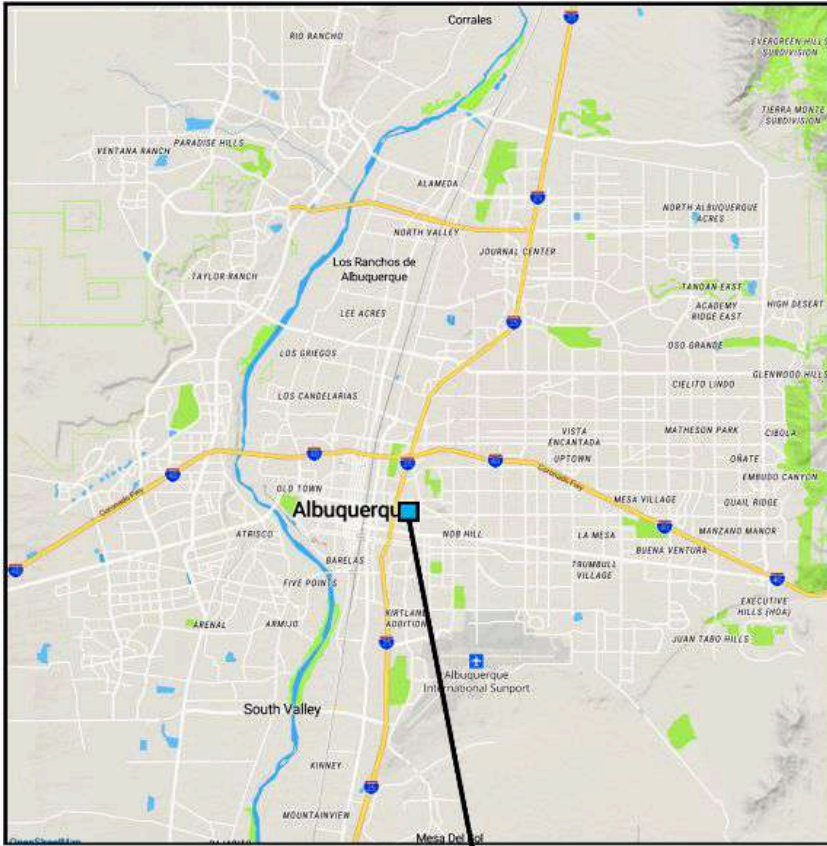
Docents stood outside to answer questions, while the owner was inside, glad to show us around. She pointed out original features: art deco door hardware; & a cool Medieval-style shield design knob, which obviously goes well in the Gothic house, both above.

The Sorority House, on the same block, started out as just that, a large gathering place for the [Phi Mu](#) Sorority, the second oldest "secret society for women in the US." It's a typical Pueblo Revival home, but with a "massive boarding school look." Inside, the arched doorway & arched step-down to the fireplace were great to see, below.

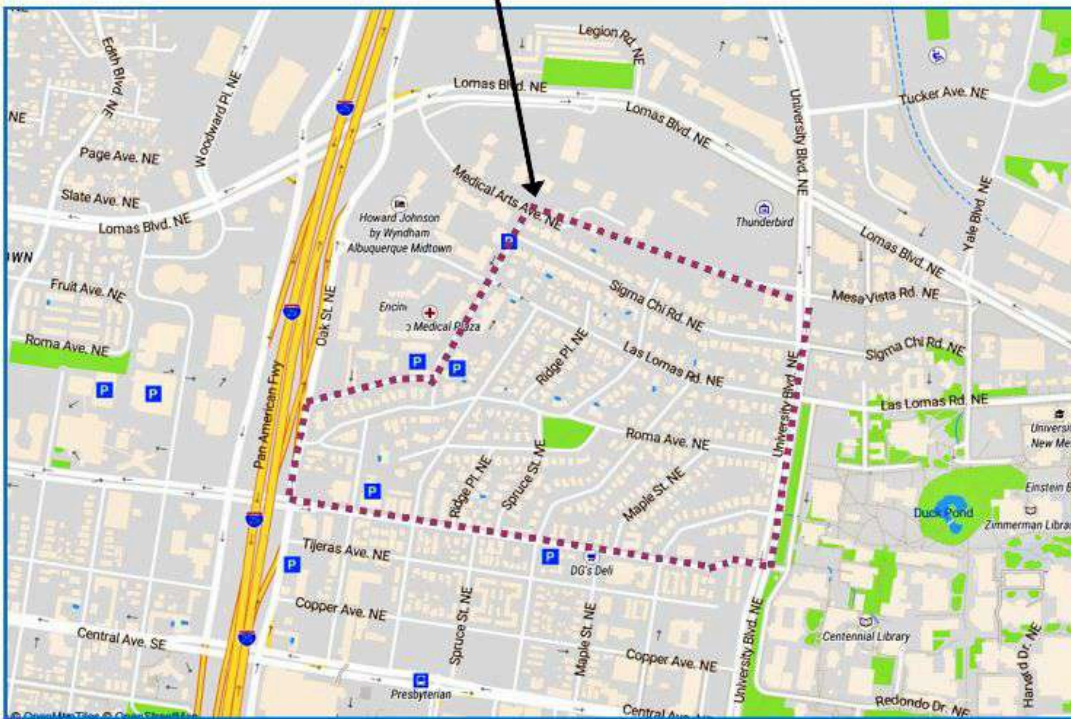








**The Spruce Park Neighborhood
Albuquerque, New Mexico**



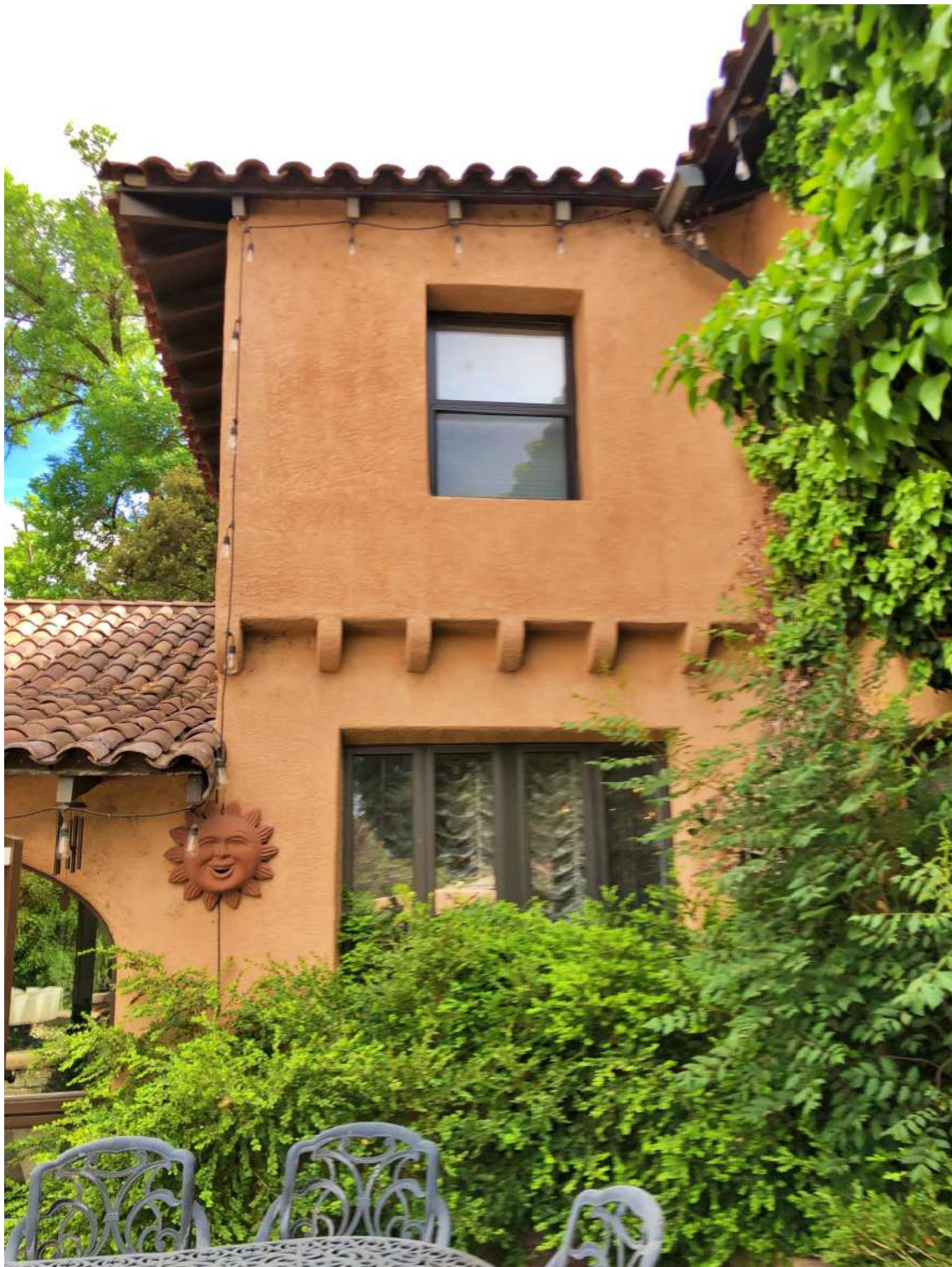
Surprisingly discreet

Unless you were looking for Spruce Park, you might never find it. Bordered by the University of New Mexico on one side, & I-25 on the other, the streets in the small pocket neighborhood are oriented mostly upon a hill, with the .83 acre

Spruce Park in the middle.

Many great architectural styles can be found on your way to the park, including Mid-Century Modern, Streamline Moderne, Spanish Pueblo Revival, Bungalows, Territorial, Two Medieval (Hobbit) Houses, Ranch style, Mediterranean, SW Vernacular, & more than one [Modernist style home](#).





Two images above are of the historic **Chester French House**, another neighborhood showpiece. The two-story Mediterranean-style home, built in 1928, is one of the largest in the neighborhood & sits surrounded by lush gardens & open greenspaces, in the front & private back patio.

Among the many interesting features of the home are the ceramic lions built into the front exterior entry walls. A perfectly placed lion can be seen at top of the newsletter; another one in profile is just below. More Alvarado Hotel/Spruce Park [lions here...](#)





Ceramic Lions from the Alvarado Hotel

The ceramic lions are purported to be from the famous former MetroABQ Fred Harvey hotel landmark, torn down in 1970 (which spurred folks in the MetroABQ to mobilize for [better historic preservation](#)). Interesting that years later the lions would find themselves imbedded in a wall around a Spruce Park home...

I looked online for some indication that the two-sided ceramic lions were from the [Alvarado Hotel](#). Finding the proof was much easier than expected: within a few clicks to the [Library of Congress website](#) & focusing on black & white images, amongst forty other Alvarado Hotel photos was the [fireplace image, above](#), with the lions facing out. Clearly good provenance...

In their first incarnation, the lions sat atop the columns in the Alvarado Hotel & acted as decorative corbels, supporting the projecting columns. I appreciate the asymmetrical [square stone quoins](#) that support the fireplace walls. A favorite new word: *quoins* are everywhere, from the Tessier House far above & fireplaces at the Alvarado Hotel, to the fireplace of the [Van Cleave House](#)--in tile form, just below...





The Van Cleave House

Sitting on a fifth of an acre corner lot, the adobe-built Van Cleave House (1927), below, is all windows & doors, light & airflow. There's also the screened-in front porch on the generally cooler north side, with an uncovered porch on each of the sides for more outdoor access.

Inside is pretty cool, too. The fireplace façade is made from terra cotta tile with Meso-American reliefs carved into many of them, seen above. Due to the fantastic glaze, the color on the tile itself seems to subtly change from one side to the other. There was some [great door hardware](#) there, too. The owner was nice to allow photos...







Historic Arches

An unexpected theme running through the tour seemed to be all the arched windows & doorways & portals present in almost every house. Inside & outside the homes, the arched openings took many forms. Above are two images from the Benton House (1926). From the brochure, the top image shows arches between, "the spiraling columns, sometimes called Solomonic columns, dividing the front triple window." The image just above shows the unique (Moorish?) entry door shape & arched door/way.

Below is a beveled open arch between front sitting room of the adobe-built Curnow House (1923), also on the tour.



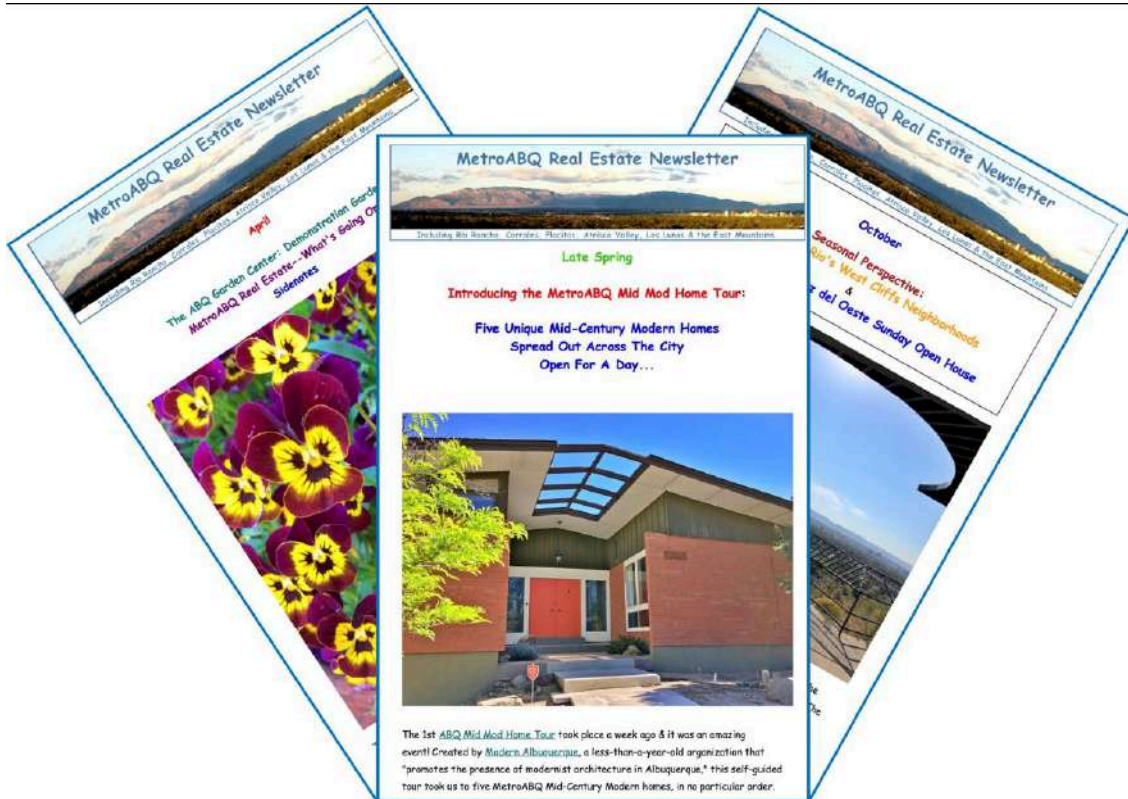


The gardens, open greenspaces & even mini-forests have grown up around these homes, creating private spaces behind walls of vegetation. The two images above are from the front & side of one home on the tour--the Orval Bradbury House (1947). The early Contemporary-styled home is mostly hidden; the lush gardens that surround the home is what makes it that way.

A thankful shout-out to Antoinette Pacheco, one of the main organizers of the event, who wears many hats: besides running the event & staffing some of the home docents with her family members, she also contributed her Pueblo Revival into the mix, the first home built in the neighborhood almost 100 years ago. Originally I met Antoinette in her role as President of [Grotto Di Via](#), her local construction company, when she invested in an infill property. Her backyard greenspace, with a modern-styled chiminea, is just below.



Along the tour route & throughout the neighborhood, it was hard not to notice numerous homes with prominent & identical front yard signs. Being ever curious, I looked up NO-HPO.com...See you next month!



Miss something?

Art, Architecture & the Outdoors

There is a lot to enjoy in the MetroABQ Newsletter, which has been publishing almost monthly since 2010.

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