Developer Joseph Eichler and his Eichler Homes, Inc. built nearly 11,000 single-family homes in California, beginning in the late 1940s. In Northern California, they can be found in cities such as San Francisco, Oakland, and Sacramento. Three small communities of Eichlers in Southern California stand in Orange, Thousand Oaks, and Granada Hills. In addition, there are three Eichler-built residences in New York state. Together these thousands of “Eichlers” reflect the beauty and uniqueness of the Eichler design and the integrity and daring of the builder behind it. Fifty years later, the house that Joe built endures as a marvelous legacy.

By the mid-1940s, Joseph Eichler had become intrigued by modernist design and in particular one of the creations of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who had designed the Bazett House in Mill Valley, California. Eichler became a fan of Wright’s work and began to dream of building his own community of homes that would reflect the same flair for design. He turned to a stable of progressive architects, including the San Francisco firm of Anshen & Allen, Jones & Emmons, and finally Claude Oakland, for help in creating the designs for these homes. The end result was a series of homes that featured walls of glass, atriums, and radiant-heat floors, all intended to blur the boundaries between the indoors and the outdoors. These homes were designed to be affordable for the middle-class family, a concept that was groundbreaking at the time.

Patterns and textiles are the underlying structure for the progression and development of design throughout history. Motifs created through patterns are the building blocks for interior design. In interior design these items are highly influential to the development and accuracy of historical precedents and projects. Examples of this are seen in the use of geometric patterns in the 1950s and 1960s, which were a reflection of the modernist movement.

Joseph Eichler passed away in 1974 at age 73. Now, 35 years later, when it comes to painting a picture of Joe Eichler, his family and peers remain clear about what he stood for and what made him tick. One side of Eichler was a relentless go-getter who knew what he wanted, how to get to it, and how to get around the roadblocks and even his own shortcomings. “Before and even after my father passed, my brother and I would call on him to ask him for help. He was a problem solver,” said Ned Eichler, who worked as a project manager for the company.

Another side of Eichler’s character was his enormous charm, wonderful humor, and absolute honesty. He refused to be swayed by associates who saw greater profits in design shortcuts, and he was not afraid to stand up for what he believed in. “The architectural principles my father had come to hold dear would have been violated. We would have disappointed him,” said Ned Eichler.

A strong proponent of fair housing and deeply opposed to racial discrimination, the liberal Eichler was the first large, tract builder to sell to minorities, and even built homes for African Americans. In later years, he offered to buy back homes from those who had trouble accepting their neighbors. “If, as you claim, this will destroy property values, I could lose millions...You should be ashamed of yourselves for wasting your time and mine with such pettiness,” Joe once told some disgruntled Eichler owners.

Eichler homes are considered historical landmarks in the state of California, making them celebrated buildings. For this project we explored the architect’s design thinking and aesthetic to create an authentic mid-century modern lodge for visitors to stay in. In addition, we researched and created branding, graphics, and fabric lines to inspire and create the most authentic experience possible. These deliverables greatly influenced the design of this Eichler Lodge.