

atomic ranch

MIDCENTURY MARVELS



FALL 2010



\$6.95 us/can
On sale until December 1, 2010

- alvar aalto
- custom connecticut
- deluxe cliff may
- prefab ranch

nick of time

Tucson, Ariz.

photography Paul Hart



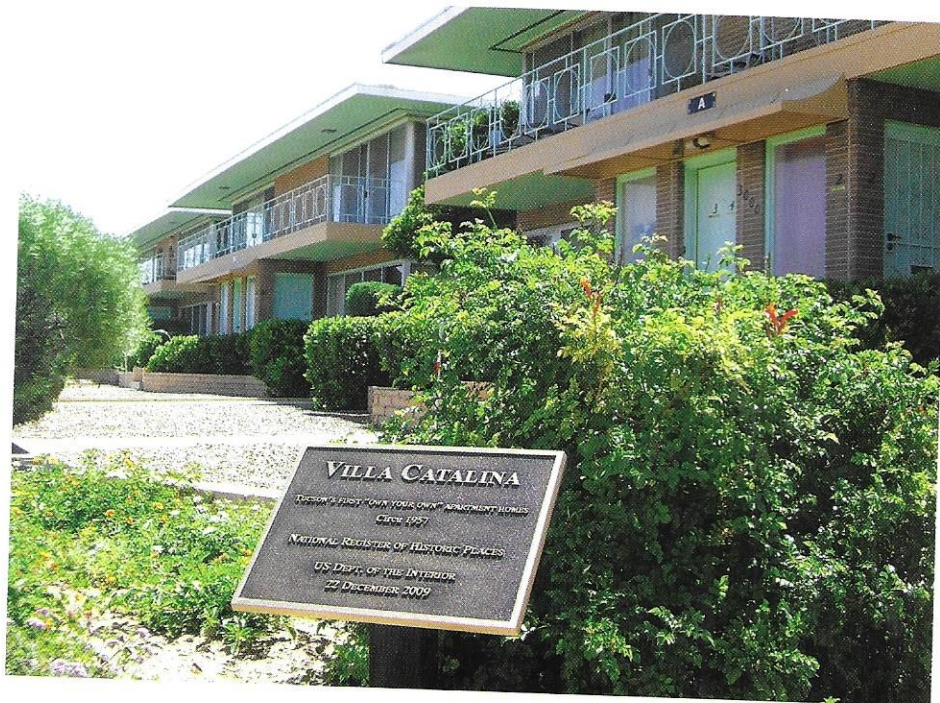
it took three years and lots of patience, but a grant writer and a retired police detective are responsible for getting a condo complex on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tucson's Villa Catalina co-op apartments, which range from 1,000 to 3,000 square feet, were built between 1957 and 1961. The 79 open-plan homes have balconies or patios that face a central courtyard with two kidney-shaped pools, built-in barbecues and the quintessential midcentury amenity, shuffleboard courts.

Paul Hart, retired from the New Jersey police force, and his wife, Janet, the aforementioned grant writer, made the

case that the Villa's special attributes include its association with prominent California developer Lionel Mayell, and showed that it is an outstanding example of a modern, low-rise postwar garden apartment.

"Villa Catalina had no historic standing when we began this process," Paul says. "Identifying the criteria on which to support a nomination is a key factor; all else is in support of the stated criteria. [Be prepared to] seek out local educators and/or architectural professionals with an interest in historic preservation—in our case this came in the form of free advice and guidance—pay attention to detail, stay focused



on the criteria you're attempting to support and, where necessary, seek professional assistance. Anyone interested in pursuing a listing on the National Register should be committed to the undertaking—it won't happen quickly."

The Harts ultimately hired a consultant who crafted the final 35-page application, which singles out the decorative-block courtyard walls, balcony railings, aluminum sliding glass doors, steel casement windows, slab entry doors and indoor/outdoor living spaces as noteworthy architectural elements. Considerable text is devoted to the developer's career and the historical context of garden

apartments, with citations running to three pages.

"Our experience with the various municipal, county, state and federal agencies involved was very positive," Paul reports. "I think our skill sets helped us in putting the pieces together during the preliminary part of the process and allowed us to identify where more focused professional assistance was required. All this led to a successful nomination on its first review."

Visit virtually and download the NRHP nomination at villacatalina.org.