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Joseph Eichler Home Remodeled with Hakatai Glass Tile

(Photos courtesy of Victoria Chow)



For Immediate Release: In post-war California a visionary developer and home builder emerged and forever changed the landscape with ideas and concepts considered far too radical at the time for conventional mid-century America. Joseph Eichler built more than 11,000 homes between 1950 and his death in 1974, collaborating with established architects to accomplish his mission of designing open, inclusive planned communities for middle-class families. His particular brand of mid-century architecture would later place him among the most influential home builders of his or any era, now glowingly referred to in current times simply as “California Modern.”

Eichler left his largest impression on the landscape of Northern California where the vast majority of his homes were built. From the San Francisco Bay to Sacramento, San Mateo, San Jose, Palo Alto and back again, Eichler’s forward thinking architectural concepts and savvy designs transcended his time and left a lasting legacy on how Americans felt about home building. Eichler, though a true pioneer in his field, was not alone in his preference for glass mosaic tile as a major component of his design schemes during this period. This versatile, sleek and flexible design element experienced its golden era during the mid-century, but in recent years has enjoyed a prominent revival and place in contemporary design.

Hakatai, a leading glass mosaic tile supplier, has plenty of experience in providing products for remodeling mid-century homes and offering a myriad of design options and custom tools for new homes across America. Hakatai has gained a wide-spread reputation for consistently supplying high-quality glass mosaic tile, friendly service and affordable pricing, but recently had the special opportunity to travel back in time with the creative design of Karman Ng, principal of Cantilever Design (www.cantilever-design.com). Ng was hired for the delicate remodel of a hall bathroom in an Eichler original home in Palo Alto. After discovering Hakatai a few years back Ng knew exactly where to go for glass mosaic tile.



The signature of an Eichler has always been the integration of the outdoors with the inside of the home. Some of the terms that describe his design themes would be open, spacious, and airy, but most of these principals were applied to the common areas of the home and not necessarily the bathrooms. This challenge of space, considering the 5' x 8' hallway bathroom with 8-foot ceilings for the young couple's two boys, was the major issue Ng hoped to address when he began laying out his design program. In addition to several other clever and well thought out solutions, Ng specified Hakatai's Ashland-e collection of recycled content glass mosaic tile in the color Crystal Blue to create a fresh and more spacious feel.



Eichler also made standard the concept of implementing a second full bathroom inside the master bedroom. The "first" bathroom would serve the children or guests of the home and be located in the common hall they share. This was precisely the case with the Palo Alto home remodel. Ng's choice of transparent glass mosaics lightened and brightened up the small bathroom, but the tile's rustic elegance and handmade character added a dose of sophistication at the same time.

Hakatai's Ashland-e series glass mosaic tile is comprised of between 30 and 70 percent glass from bottles and/or waste glass that would otherwise have entered the solid waste stream. This waste glass is a mix of approximately 90 percent post-consumer recycled content and 10 percent pre-consumer materials.

As with most visionaries before and after, Eichler's homes and ideas were never fully appreciated until years later when the context and scope of his achievements were uncovered as ever-nostalgic America reflected back on a period in time that defined both where we had been and where we were going. Eichler's desire to bring the outdoors inside incorporated open floor plans through post and beam construction, large foyers, windows and skylights to bring in natural sunlight. Many of his design elements have stood the test of time and become mainstream features of almost any style of home built since.

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