

Inventing The California Look

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From the 1940s to the 1980s, some of the best residences in Northern California were decorated by a coterie of designers whose names were once recognised only by the cognoscenti of interior design. From Frances Elkins and Tony Hail, with their aristocratic aesthetics, to Michael Taylor and John Dickinson, with their bold fantasies, these designers created revolutionary settings that were idiomatic of their time and place fresh, luxurious spaces complementing the various terrains and lifestyles of the northern part of the state.

Fred Lyon (b. 1924) is perhaps the only photographer who knew and documented the work of this talented group. Akin to what Julius Shulman was doing in Southern California, Lyon worked closely with the designers and magazine editors to help shape the look for posterity.

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