

Space exploration

Hubbell Homes Tour takes you to some far-out places

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There's a killer view of Fiesta Island from the back yard of the home owned by Cathy Conheim and Donna Brooks, but most visitors take a glance, and then immediately focus on the guest house nestled into the landscape just to the left of that million-dollar view.

The mushroom-shaped Hubbell "hut," as its owners affectionately refer to it, is a fairy-tale building, a home worthy of a butterfly turned into a human, with its underwater stained-glass windows, built-in furniture, round rooms and rounded ceilings.

The hut is the creative child of San Diego painter/sculptor/designer James Hubbell and is just one of the visual treats on the Hubbell Homes Tour 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 19.

This first-ever, inside look at six homes influenced by Hubbell will be a bittersweet event for Hubbell and for all who are fond of him or in awe of his creative genius. The tour is a substitute for the annual open house at Anne and James Hubbell's Santa Ysabel home – an enchanting compound embellished with stained glass, wrought-iron work, ceramic and bronze sculptures – which burned in last October's wildfires.

For 20 years, the Hubbells have welcomed the public into their home and studios, and the number of visitors has increased yearly. Now, half the buildings are gutted, and the others have been damaged. The Hubbells expect repairs and restoration to take about two years, depending on funding and help.

The proceeds from the tour will help rebuild the compound, which eventually will be transferred to the Ilan-Lael Foundation, the nonprofit arts education foundation started by James and Anne Hubbell decades ago.

The six Hubbell-inspired homes on the tour are:

- The Hubbell hut, also known as the Conheim/Brooks Guest House in La Jolla: The building is 30 feet in diameter, but packs a lot into its 600 square feet. There is a living room, bathroom, sitting room and bedroom, small enough to feel cozy, but not claustrophobic because, as Cathy Conheim notes, "the windows that meet the ground give the 'hut' a feeling of openness and nature." The stained-glass windows, when backlit at night, give the impression of being underwater. This gem is its own tiny

If you go

WHAT: The Hubbell Homes Tour, a look at six Hubbell-inspired private homes

WHERE: In North and East county

WHEN: June 19, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

COST: General admission \$40; students \$25; age 16 and under free.

HOW: Before June 15, send a check payable to the Ilan-Lael Foundation, and send to: Ilan-Lael Foundation, c/o Homes Tour, P.O. Box 1221, Julian, CA 92036, or order online at www.hubbellandhubbell.com. After June 15, call (619) 819-0250.

enclosed world, with "its own energy," Conheim said.

■The Rainbow Bed and Breakfast in Julian: This miniature castle took eight years to build, and owner Phil Gay admits that work is ongoing. From its perch on a hill, it's possible to see to Coronado in one direction and "across the state of California, practically," in another, according to Gay, who adds, "It's like living in a 2,200-square-foot sculpture."

INFORMATION: Call (619) 819-0250 or visit www.hubbellandhubbell.com, and click on "What's New."

■The Davidson residence in Alpine: From certain angles, this home looks like a Hobbit house built into a hillside, but from the front, it looks as though a geode was cracked down the middle to reveal a door into a magical world. The home features the curves and stained-glass windows so dear to James Hubbell.

■The Beaton residence in Jamul: Sherry Beaton, who with her husband Jan owns a Hubbell-designed home, said, "The physical site determined the form of the house. Our boulders played a significant role in the design. Jim incorporated boulders as walls within the house and its exterior. We also used feng shui that identified a small boulder that became the 'heart of the house.' "

■De Renouard residence in Jamul: Architect Drew Hubbell, son of James Hubbell and his partner in Hubbell & Hubbell Artists and Architects, described the residence as "contemporary Southwestern style. It includes an arbored entry courtyard, fountain, detached garage, cabana, and a black-bottomed pool." The home, enhanced by James Hubbell mosaics, is positioned to capture sweeping views.

■The Lyon residence in Escondido: The architect of this home was the late Sim Bruce Richards, James Hubbell's mentor, friend and collaborator on this and other houses. Richards designed the home with recycled material, including second-quality oak flooring that bore machinery marks and old doors imported from Mexico. Owner Nancy Lyon considers the Hubbell-designed window in the master bath the best of the works built into the house.

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