



Mapping the Homes of Architecture's Stars

By MARIA NEWMAN NOV. 9, 2012

Fans of 20th-century architecture now have a Web site that can direct them to important houses anywhere in the world. Iconichouses.org provides a map of more than 100 unique structures and extensive visitor information. The site, introduced last month, guides visitors, for example, to the Berlin home of the modernist German architect Bruno Taut, indicates what they can find in the surrounding neighborhood (museums and jogging trails) and gives the rental status of the property — it's available for up to four guests.

The founder of the site, Natascha Drabbe, is an architectural historian whose personal interest in residential masterworks began after she acquired the home of the Dutch architect Mart Van Schijndel in the Netherlands. "We worked four years on this," she said. "Every continent is represented."

She found other modern-house museum curators who shared her interest in preservation and knowledge-swapping. They formed a committee to put together the list of properties that should be included. The group includes Lynda Waggoner, director of Fallingwater, the Frank Lloyd Wright house in Pennsylvania; Kimberli Meyer, director of the MAK Center at the Schindler House in Los Angeles; Iveta Cerna, director of Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat in the Czech Republic; and Susanna Pettersson, director of the Alvar Aalto Foundation.

Ms. Drabbe said that making the houses more accessible to visitors would elevate interest in their preservation. "Now, if you're visiting Paris, for example, our site allows you to see that you're close to the only house Alvar Aalto built outside Finland. This information wasn't so easy to come by before."