

# Building Character

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In our last message we mentioned that San José has two neighborhoods that were once referred to as “residence parks.” Our friends, the Grumplemooses, were over the other night asking, “What’s the other one?” The Grumplemooses? Yes, names have been changed to protect the innocent. First, what exactly is a “residence park?” This term was used in the early 1900’s to describe exclusive and restricted neighborhood developments in North America. According to Wikipedia, “The idea that you did not have to pack up and go to a park, but actually live in one, was part of the attraction.” Residence parks reflected certain architectural standards and landscape design meant to foster a sense of community and appreciation of nature and art. Drum roll please... What is the name of the other San José residence park?... Palm Haven! I regret to inform you, there is no money for prizes in the budget at this time.

## Palm Haven



Palm Haven is one of our most favorite and coveted neighborhoods. As you’re driving toward Willow Glen in San José, it appears out of nowhere like Chowchilla... I mean an oasis. How will you know when you see it? The beautiful streets lined with palm trees, of course.

### Boundaries:

The Palm Haven neighborhood is located adjacent to the area known as Willow Glen in San José. The neighborhood’s focal point is Palm Haven Avenue which consists of a large grass median and a triangular park with formal landscaping. The neighborhood is bordered by Bird Avenue to the east, Coe Avenue to the south, and Riverside Drive which curves around the west and north boundaries.

According to a website dedicated to information about Palm Haven, the entrances to the original development were marked by large, Mission-Revival concrete pillars adorned with planted urns and electric lanterns hanging from substantial wooden brackets. Several of these pillars still exist today and the neighborhood has restored many of these important architectural elements.

### History:

Established in 1913 by developers Eaton, Vestal and Hershbach, Palm Haven features many architect-designed homes including Mission Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Spanish Colonial styles. “Indeed, Palm Haven managed to attract some of San José’s leading professionals and politicians to commission architect-specified residences in the neighborhood. Most of those residences remain today as the neighborhood has survived the changes that came with growth in suburbs and the many economic swings that affected San José. But

the most visible marker of Palm Haven’s tenacious claim to its part of San José are the great old palm trees that line the streets. The nearly 100 year-old trees stand tall today as though to guard Palm Haven from all peril and comfort those below who rest in their windy whisper.”

### Places with Character:

**Flower Flour, [www.flower-flour.com](http://www.flower-flour.com):** I made James do an emergency u-turn yesterday and take me back to this amazing bakery and patisserie. Men, the girlie décor may not be your thing, but I guarantee you won’t bat an eyelash once you’ve tasted anything they make: sandwiches, salads, scones. We are convinced they make the best chocolate chip cookies around and are planning a chocolate chip cookie taste-off in the near future to prove it. Specialty’s, you’ve got some serious competition.

**Orchard Supply Hardware, [www.osh.com](http://www.osh.com):** Over our many years of house restoration, I have developed a terrible allergy to a certain giant, orange, home improvement warehouse store. Its frigid temperatures and ludicrous service require that I cower in the car and avert my eyes while others run errands. If you’re looking for a more enjoyable Saturday hardware store experience, visit one of the original Orchard Supply Hardware stores. The OSH at 720 West San Carlos is very close to Palm Haven and was the third OSH ever opened. “1931 was a year of hard times for farmers in San Jose, California. Two years of drought and crop failures plus the Great Depression brought plenty of economic woe. Thirty farmers, mostly prune growers, considered buying their farm supplies as a cooperative. Each farmer put up \$30 and Orchard Supply was born.” Also, OSH is currently selling an emergency earthquake kit. As the Queen of Earthquake Paranoia (and of course the news these days just continues to bolster my case), I recommend going out and getting yourself one. You can thank me when we’re enjoying our canned food and emergency blankets in the comfort of your backyard.

**Hicklebees, [www.hicklebees.com](http://www.hicklebees.com):** Technically, Hicklebees is in Willow Glen, as many of these recommendations are. Generally the best things close to Palm Haven are in Willow Glen. If you have kids, know kids, were a kid, then you must visit Hicklebees. This seems to be one of, if not the, best independently owned children’s bookstores around. They have an amazing selection of books, bilingual stories, and events. Plus, a Harry Potter-esque name. I also recommend visiting Treehouse in the Glen ([www.treehouseintheglen.com](http://www.treehouseintheglen.com)). They carry simple, wooden, environmentally friendly toys that can cost a pretty penny. They don’t carry toys that will mysteriously belt out high-pitched music and singing in the middle of the night, scaring the bejeezus out of you and making you seriously rethink your stance on the existence of ghosts.

**Taqueria Tlaquepaque, [www.yelp.com/biz/taqueria-tlaquepaque-no-1-san-jose](http://www.yelp.com/biz/taqueria-tlaquepaque-no-1-san-jose)** I just discovered I’ve been calling this place TLaquePLaque when it’s TLaquePAque. Perdóname. The name’s a mouthful and so is the food... people LOVE this place. Apparently, one of the major draws is an alcoholic beverage called super chavelas. I interviewed James on what this is and why it’s so great, “It’s a beer like a fish bowl. I think it has a shot of tequila, lime juice, and salt. Que bueeeeeeeno.”

Jaimie Fucillo (a.k.a., James’ wife), March 2010

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# Are you Indispensable?

As many of you may know, I'm an avid reader. I've been known to read multiple books at once, and when you include audio books, I probably read a handful of books a month.

I also read blogs, and one that I read almost every day is Seth Godin's. Seth is probably one of the best marketers alive right now. I just love his ideas. I'm reading his new book now and it's the only book I'm reading. I'm totally sucked in.

The new book is called Linchpin. To start off with...what's a linchpin? Basically a linchpin is a clip that holds everything together. And for Seth a linchpin is an indispensable part of a team or company. These people cannot be replaced; they are far too unique and valuable.

So how do you become a linchpin...by becoming an artist. By Seth's definition, an artist is not our image of a person who paints with brushes & canvas, an artist is someone who does (and I LOVE this term) "emotional work."

Emotional work is the work that we put our heart & soul into. Work that you sacrifice for, because, by your standards, it's the only way to do it right. The kind of work that you HAVE to do, that keeps you up at night, and gets you up in the morning.

According to Seth, we now live in two worlds. In one world is the consumption first mindset: the McMansion, credit card, Walmart World...and that world is getting more brutal all the time. The other is the world of art, of making a connection, of caring, of hand-made, of work that matters.

He argues that the first world is impossible to thrive in, and the second has a real shortage of people who care enough to connect. And so that's your big chance—to do art, to change people, to be human.

So which world will you live in?

## Palm Haven - Real Estate Market

Palm Haven has always been a favorite of ours. Whether it's the Palm lined streets or the central grassy park, Jaimie and I have always been drawn to this neighborhood. In fact at one time Jaimie and I thought long and hard about purchasing a home on Palm Haven Avenue, but it was only a 2 bedroom with a smaller lot and would not have worked for our growing family. Though the view looking out over the park was a real selling feature, and probably one of the reasons it sold so quickly.

The real estate market in Palm Haven is an interesting one. When I started my career in real estate most people didn't (and many still don't) differentiate Palm Haven from the greater Willow Glen area. But lately, due largely to the Neighborhood Associations improvements in the development and some great remodels, the neighborhoods has been able to stand on its own.

In the past, the average home price in Palm Haven was either very close, or only slightly above the average of Willow Glen, but lately that trend is changing **DRAMATICALLY**.

For the last 12 months Willow Glen's average price is around \$642,000, while Palm Haven's is \$923,000. Quite a difference! But what really plays into this dramatic difference. Obviously the lower inventory plays a big factor, only 10 homes sold in the last 12 months.



The homes have gotten much bigger lately as well. Since the Palm Haven Restoration Committee went to work in 2004 to improve all the public areas of Palm Haven, the interest in the area has jumped. In my opinion, when the original pillars at the intersections were completed, people sat up and took note. When originally built, the average size home in this neighborhood was somewhere between 1600-1800 square feet. Thanks to recent improvements and remodels the average is now closer to 2,000 square feet with a few as big as 2,700 square feet. This is probably the biggest reason for the difference in average sales price.

So what does the future real estate market for Palm Haven look like? At this point I'd say only up. If projects such as NOVUSPACE's upgrade of a Spanish bungalow on Plaza drive are the new norm, then this neighborhood will only improve in value.

Want to know more about this neighborhood market or what your home may be worth? Do you know someone who would love to buy a home in Palm Haven? Send me an e-mail at: [James@Serenogroup.com](mailto:James@Serenogroup.com)



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