

# DEPARTURES

MAY/JUNE 2011



Woody Allen in Cannes



Coco Chanel Strikes Gold



Alec Baldwin Loves NYC



Zaha Hadid's Chinese Opera House



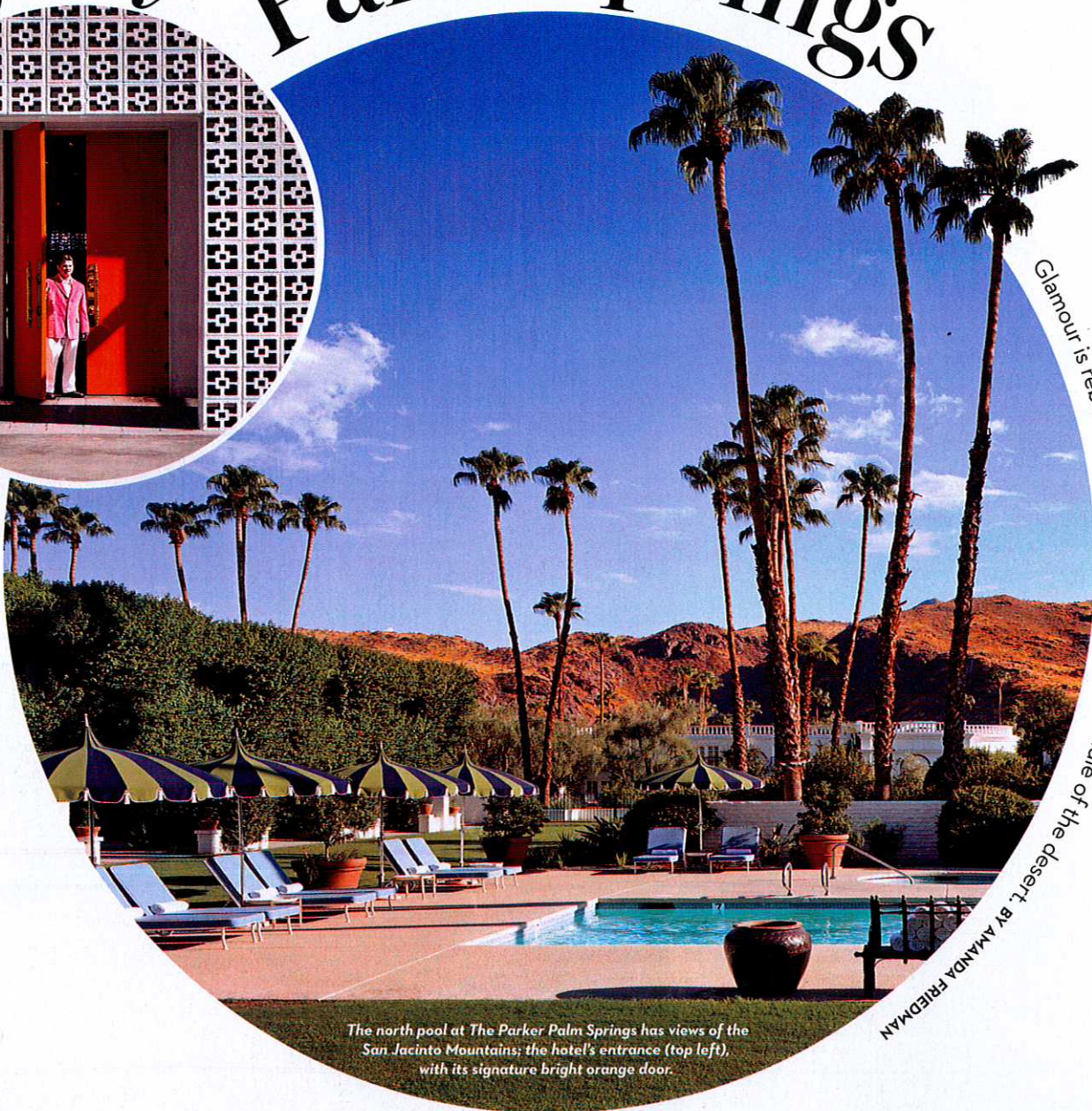
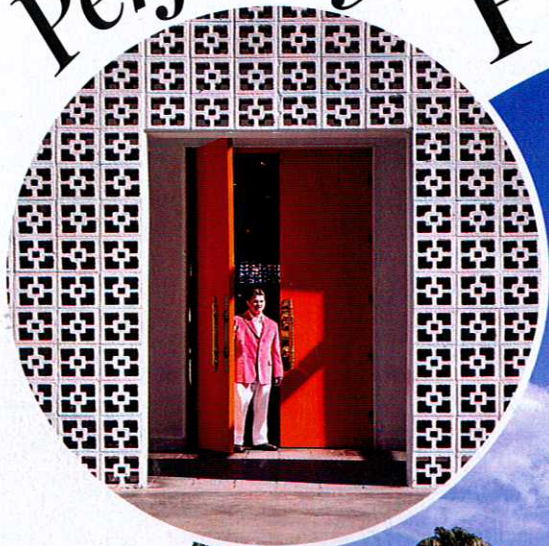
David Hockney's iMasterpieces



David Copperfield's Caribbean Magic...and more ►

LONG WEEKEND

# Perfectly Palm Springs



Glamour is reborn in this cultural oasis in the middle of the desert. BY AMANDA FRIEDMAN

The north pool at The Parker Palm Springs has views of the San Jacinto Mountains; the hotel's entrance (top left), with its signature bright orange door.

**F**ed by the mineral waters from the San Jacinto Mountains, Palm Springs has always been a getaway. It was for early pioneers who gathered here in the late 1800s. For presidents from Roosevelt to, perhaps more famously, Eisenhower. It also boasted film stars like Cary Grant and Frank Sinatra, who turned Palm Springs into America's most glamorous oasis in the 1950s. Seeking eternal sunshine—more than 350 days a year—the glitterati from Los Angeles drove 100 miles east on I-10 into the Coachella Valley, to their elegant, modernist desert homes for weekends of cocktails, cabanas

and oblivion. The age of Ol' Blue Eyes in the Valley may have ended years ago, but Palm Springs remains as alluring as ever. Endless fairways, pristine pools and the famous healing waters continue to attract Angelenos looking to escape Southland. Then there are those always searching for The New. "The abundant sunshine, the climate and the intense natural beauty make it one very special place," says art historian and collector Hal Meltzer, a longtime resident. "But the desert has indeed moved into the 21st century. Its current incarnation is quite exciting." Now innovative stores like **Insolito Home** and **Trina Turk**

**Residential** (see “Shopping List”) sit beside midcentury modern emporia. In addition to classic restaurants like **Copley’s** and **Spencer’s**, there are fresh favorites like **Cheeky’s** and **Trio**.

The essence of a Palm Springs trip really depends on the hotel. Since opening in 2004, **The Parker Palm Springs** (rooms, from \$295; 4200 E. Palm Canyon Dr.; 760-770-5000; [theparkerpalmsprings.com](http://theparkerpalmsprings.com)) has reigned as the premier desert resort, hosting everyone from Jay-Z and Beyoncé to Google executive chairman Eric Schmidt. The playful, 13-acre property is a maze of *Alice in Wonderland*-inspired gardens sprinkled

with oversized chessboards, hidden bocce courts and crackling fire pits. Discreetly dispersed throughout all this lush greenery are 13 über-private villas with high-walled terraces and quirky Jonathan Adler decor like leopard-spotted benches and swinging wooden chairs that resemble birdcages. The main two buildings house 131 guest rooms, as well as **Mister Parker’s**, a formal French bistro (dinner, \$65), and **Norma’s**, a West Coast version of the popular New York breakfast spot that seems much more enjoyable experienced outside on a sun-splashed patio (brunch, \$30). Options for resting and

relaxing abound. Along with two peaceful pool areas, there are red-clay tennis courts, morning yoga classes and a nautically themed spa that just added a massive coed relaxation area (see “Midcentury vs. Most Modern”).

Another Palm Springs classic is the 75-year-old **Colony Palms Hotel** (rooms,



Trina Turk’s store; a Mats Jonasson sculpture and a seat belt chair from *Insolito Home*; a copper-and-glass tree from *House 849*.

## SHOPPING LIST

A quick guide to the midcentury modernism mecca of North Palm Canyon Drive.

### 1. Modern Way

This Palm Springs staple opened in 1999 and specializes in vintage pieces like a bright green Vladimir Kagan chaise (\$3,400). [psmodernway.com](http://psmodernway.com).

### 2. Boulevard

Co-owned by an Oscar-nominated set decorator, this seven-month-old store has items like the Paul Frankl cork-topped dining set (\$18,450) used in *L.A. Confidential*. [boulevardps.com](http://boulevardps.com).

### 3. Trina Turk Residential

Turk’s only home decor shop opened in 2008 next to her clothing store, selling vintage furniture upholstered in her bold, colorful prints. [trinaturk.com](http://trinaturk.com).

### 4. Art Style Innovation

Hollywood event planners Larry Abel and Raymond McCallister sell some of their most fanciful creations here: Think neon galore. [artstyleinnovation.com](http://artstyleinnovation.com).

### 5. J. Randolph Interiors

Interior designer Mike McKendree opened this tiny shop last June and filled it with estate finds like a pair of lemon-yellow Louis G. Sherman commodes (\$3,200). 760-409-8962.

### 6. Insolito Home

Five months after opening, the store has doubled in size, adding rare foods and small-batch international wines to its superbly edited home selection. [insolitohome.com](http://insolitohome.com).

### 7. House 849

The 8,000-square-foot space is overflowing with treasures, like a copper-and-glass tree sculpture (above, \$5,800) from Dominick Laruccia Jr. [house849.com](http://house849.com).

### 8. Savage Archdeacon

This two-year-old gallery-cum-studio for artists Shawn Savage and Stephen Archdeacon now sells estate furniture as well. [savageps.com](http://savageps.com).

### 9. Christopher Anthony

Opened in 2009 and expanded last year, there’s an interesting mix of old and new, like the steel-and-acrylic bar cart (\$4,250) by Charles Hollis Jones. [christopheranthonyltd.com](http://christopheranthonyltd.com).



## TEE TIME

Awash in pinks, blues and 7,200-yard greens, the Jack Nicklaus-designed **Escena Golf Club** was completed in 2009 but already seems like a Palm Springs classic. With clear sight lines and wide fairways, the course can be as challenging or easygoing as you want. Greens fees start at \$45; [escenagolf.com](http://escenagolf.com).

## MEET THE LOCALS

Three in-the-know residents reveal their personal projects and Palm Springs picks.



**Robert Imber**  
OWNER, PALM SPRINGS  
MODERN TOURS

**WHO:** The go-to guy for desert-modern architecture, Imber can arrange exclusive private tours of Palm Springs icons, taking advantage of his insider access.

**WHERE:** His favorites are the **St. Theresa church** (designed by William F. Cody in 1968), the **1959 Bank of America building** and the **Paley House** in Little Tuscany. **Private tours start at \$750; 760-318-6118.**



**Tara Lazar**  
OWNER, CHEEKY’S  
AND BIRBA

**WHO:** At 34, Lazar is building a restaurant empire, focusing on laid-back, locally sourced cuisine.

**WHAT:** Following the success of her three-year-old brunch spot **Cheeky’s**, Lazar opened **Birba**, serving pizza and drinks, in January, and renovated an old inn behind both properties. **Cheeky’s brunch starts at \$15; [cheekysps.com](http://cheekysps.com); Birba dinner, at \$20; [birbaps.com](http://birbaps.com).**



**Paul Bruggemans**  
OWNER,  
LE VALLAURIS

**WHO:** Belgium-born Bruggemans opened this classic French restaurant in 1974, serving everyone from Elizabeth Taylor to Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz. **Dinner starts at \$50; [levallauris.com](http://levallauris.com).** **WHERE:** On nights off, he dines at **Johannes**, an unassuming Austrian spot that serves pitch-perfect dishes like roasted duck with orange tarragon glaze. **Dinner starts at \$40; [johannes-restaurant.com](http://johannes-restaurant.com).**

from \$150; 572 N. Indian Canyon Dr.; 760-969-1800; colonypalmsotel.com), which completed a \$16 million renovation in 2008. Formerly home to a 1930s underground speakeasy and brothel, the Spanish Colonial hotel now has 56 guest rooms with bright, Moroccan-inspired interiors from Hollywood decorator Martyn Lawrence-Bullard surrounding a hibiscus-filled courtyard and pool. (Early risers quickly snatch up the two oversized daybeds.) The renovation added a four-suite Moroccan spa and a Mediterranean restaurant, **Purple Palm** (dinner, \$65), one of the best dining options in Palm Springs. At night, the open-air pool-side restaurant is filled with locals eating dishes like Alaskan lingcod with maple-glazed sweet potato gnocchi and sipping lavender mojitos.

Nestled next to the Palm Springs Art Museum, the often overlooked **Willows Historic Palm Springs Inn** (rooms, from \$295; 412 W. Tahquitz Canyon Way; 760-320-0771; thewillowspalmsprings.com) is the thinking man's boutique hotel. An eight-bedroom Mediterranean villa built in 1924, this is where Albert Einstein frequently visited and Clark Gable and Carole Lombard stayed on their honeymoon. In the mid-'90s, the house was restored into a B&B in archly opulent old Hollywood style. The bedrooms are filled with antique



A Moroccan-inspired bedroom at the Colony Palms Hotel

walnut furnishings, mahogany-beamed ceilings, wood-burning fireplaces and claw-foot tubs. It's a homelier version of San Simeon. Perhaps best of all, room service is delivered from the storied French restaurant **Le Vallauris**, right across the street (see "Meet the Locals").

But perhaps the most apt embodiment of the new Palm Springs—and certainly the watering hole around which today's Sinatras gather—is the two-year-old **Ace Hotel & Swim Club** (rooms, from \$90; 701 E. Palm Canyon Dr.; 760-325-9900; acehotel.com).

Perfectly matched with the vibe of the popular annual Coachella music festival in nearby Indio, the 176 rooms in a converted motel have a bohemian-camping feel with cloth-covered, tent-like walls, vintage furniture, record players and concrete floors (the best have patios with gardens and outdoor fireplaces). There is also a diner-style restaurant in a former Denny's, a simply appointed spa and two pools that become especially rowdy on weekends, when they literally overflow with party people from L.A. Change the music from Interpol to Dean Martin, swap out the sangria for a tumbler of scotch, squint and you're right back in the golden era of Palm Springs. ■



**SLEEP LIKE SINATRA**

But with a full-time concierge.

Frank Sinatra's parties—marked by a Jack Daniel's flag flying over his home—were legendarily debauched. His HQ was Twin Palms, a beautiful 1947 compound designed by E. Stewart Williams. Now restored, the four-bedroom home bears traces of Sinatra's salad days. There's still a crack in a bathroom sink

from a rumored dispute involving Lana Turner, his then-wife Ava Gardner and a bottle of whiskey. The piano-shaped pool, however, is in perfect condition. The home is now available to rent and comes with a concierge, who will arrange anything from a chef to a security guard. From \$2,600 per night; 760-318-2090; beaumontvillas.com.



The Frank Sinatra Twin Palms Estate

*This or That*  
**MIDCENTURY vs. MOST MODERN**

**SPA**

**SPA RESORT CASINO**  
Take advantage of Palm Springs' mineral waters, flowing from the San Jacinto Mountains, with the Taking of the Waters treatment, an old sanitorium favorite. Treatments start at \$40; sparesortcasino.com.



The Parker

**PALM SPRINGS YACHT CLUB**  
In The Parker's newly renovated spa, a coed relaxation area features a saline pool, two whirlpools, a candlelit nap room and, best of all, cocktails. Treatments start at \$60; theparkerpalmsprings.com.

**BRUNCH**

**SPENCER'S**  
This stalwart features seven variations of eggs Benedict, like the surf and turf, made with crab cakes and filet mignon. Brunch starts at \$20; spencersrestaurant.com.

**CHEEKY'S**  
Market-driven dishes based on local ingredients change weekly, but staples include a delicious yam sandwich with cilantro, feta and tomato. Brunch starts at \$15; cheekysps.com.

**DINNER**

**COPLEY'S**  
Located in part of Cary Grant's former home, there's an elegant outdoor terrace and dishes like lavender-and parsley-scented rack of lamb. Dinner starts at \$25; copleypalmsprings.com.



Trio  
This is dinner as spectator sport. Stick with standards like the skirt steak or sea bass and delve into the vibrant Palm Springs singles scene. Dinner starts at \$25; triopalm springs.com.

**ART**

**PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM**  
Opened in 1938, it has a wonderful selection of modern art and temporary exhibits, like "Comic Art Indigène," featuring Native American artists, starting June 17. psmuseum.org

**MICHAEL H. LORD GALLERY**  
This three-year-old gallery on the North Palm Canyon shopping strip displays local artists like Nel Ivancich and big names like Robert Rauschenberg. michaelhordgallery.com.

**NIGHTLIFE**

**MELVYN'S**  
With waiters in tuxedos, old Hollywood photos and Veal Ingleside, Melvyn's channels midcentury Palm Springs, often with the same players and patrons. Dinner starts at \$40; ingle sideinn.com.



**TORME'S**  
Mel Tormé's daughter, Melissa, opened Tormé's last October to rekindle Palm Springs glamour. With great food and live music, she succeeded. Dinner starts at \$30; tormespalm springs.com.