

An Insider's Guide to Palm Springs, California's Desert Revival

Where to eat, sleep, shop and play the bongo drums poolside—with sage advice from Jonathan Adler, Suzanne Somers and other aficionados of this buzzy desert town

By *Kathryn O'Shea-Evans*

Dec. 19, 2017 9:03 a.m. ET

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ELIZABETH TAYLOR AND ELVIS PRESLEY had more in common than bouffant hairdos. They both owned getaway houses in Palm Springs, Calif.—and not solely for the winter sunshine. “Studios had a rule that stars couldn’t travel more than 120 miles from L.A. while they were filming, but it was more than that,” said Michael Stern, who runs the Modern Tour, a behind-closed-doors look at the city’s midcentury architecture (themoderntour.com). “Paparazzi weren’t allowed to take pictures in Palm Springs without consent—that’s why everyone had a house here. They turned it into a party town.”



The party died down in ensuing decades, but it seems to be regaining some rowdiness. Tucked between those low-slung buildings—most homes must be single-story to preserve the views of the San Jacinto Mountains—are new and soon-to-open hotels and sceney restaurants. We asked a few longtime locals and regulars to share their favorite diversions in and around Palm Springs, from the best shops for indulging a mania for the 1960s to where to play your bongo drums poolside.

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Holiday House PHOTO: JESSICA SAMPLE FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Plus Don't Miss... Holiday House Palm Springs. At this new adults-only, 28-room inn, amenities include shuffleboard, loaner bikes, a pool, art by David Hockney and Roy Lichtenstein but no TVs. *From \$229 a night, holidayhouseps.com* // Peninsula Pastries. For this bakery in an unassuming strip mall, a French expat couple import flour from Beauce, France. *611 S Palm Canyon Dr., 760-832-6486* // Agua Caliente Cultural Museum. To see a traditional kish hut freshly built each year from palm fronds and arrowweed, head to the leafy patio of this museum dedicated to the area's indigenous tribe. *219 South Palm Canyon Dr.; accmuseum.org* // The Frippery. At this trove of vintage apparel, look for caftans, Pucci dresses and Italian and French sunglasses from the '50s-'70s. *664 N Palm Canyon Dr., thefrippery.com* . // Elvis Honeymoon Hideaway. Elvis leased this 5,000-square-foot house in 1966 and 1967, and holed

up with Priscilla there after their Las Vegas wedding. Tours run twice daily. *1350 ladera circle, elvishoneymoon.com*

The CHEF

Gabriel Woo

Chef at Sparrows Lodge and Holiday House



NIGHT OWL // Seymour's. This tiny, speakeasy-like bar opened last year, hidden off the side of Mr. Lyons restaurant. They have great cocktails; I like the earthy Little Owl, with house-made IPA syrup. *233 E Palm Canyon Dr., seymoursps.com*

WESTERN FRONT // Pappy & Harriet's.

Pioneertown was built by Roy Rogers and Gene Autry [among others], for shooting westerns; now it houses this small music venue and barbecue

restaurant in the middle of the mountains. *53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown,*

pappyandharriets.com

TACO UPGRADE // Justin Eat & Drink. A chef-friend recently opened this place and is doing cool stuff like chicken confit tacos with mole. *68784 E Palm Canyon Dr., Cathedral City, 760-904-4093*

POOL PERKS // Sam's Family Spa. It's not luxurious, but it has nice mineral pools (hot and cool) and you can bring in whatever you want: food, drinks, bongo drums. *70875 Dillon Rd., Desert Hot Springs; samsfamilyspa.com*