

Greater

PALM SPRINGS

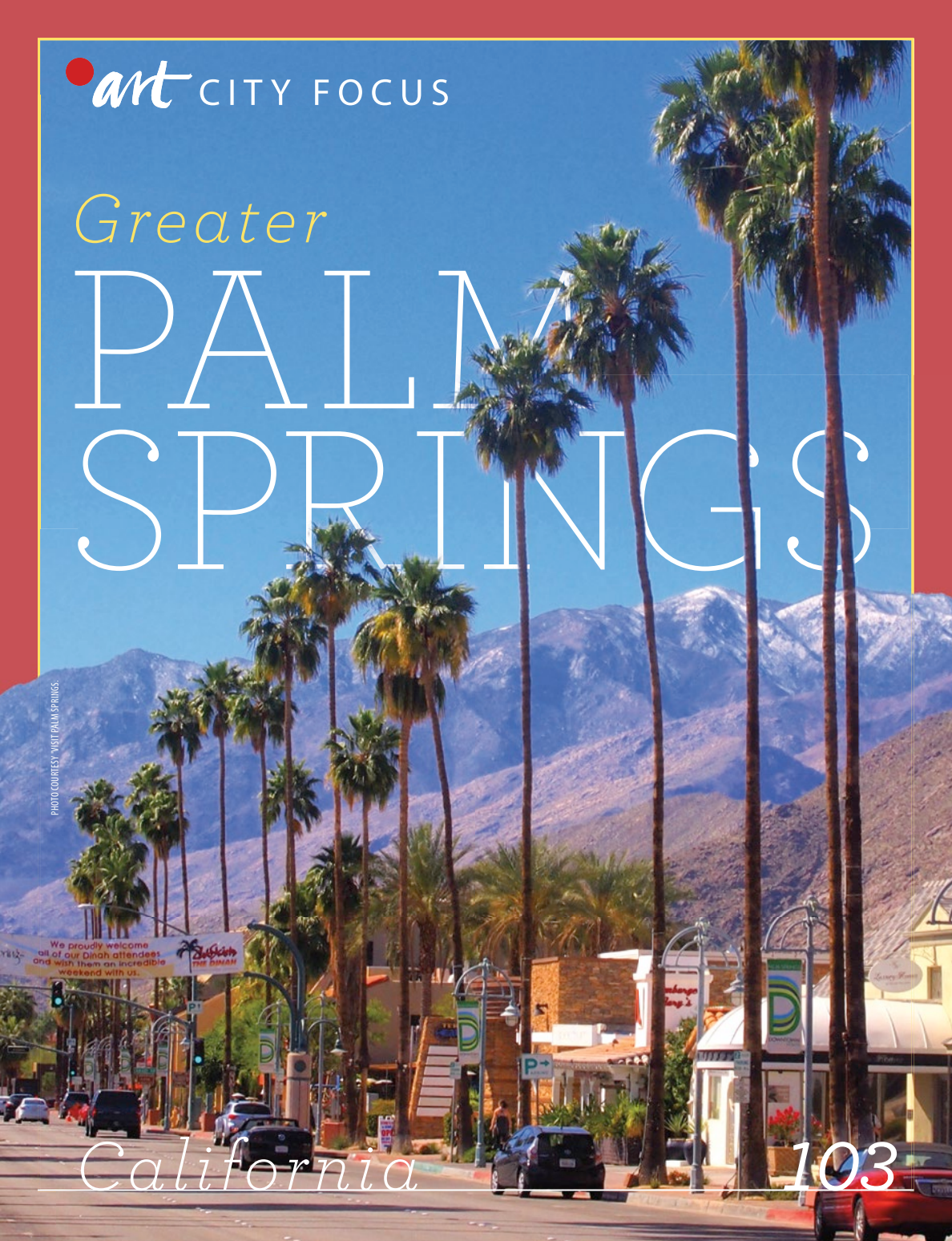
PHOTO COURTESY VISIT PALM SPRINGS.

We proudly welcome
all of our Dinah attendees
and wish them an incredible
weekend with us.



California

103



By Kelly Carper

Located on the western edge of the Coachella Valley and tucked beneath the towering San Jacinto Mountains, Palm Springs is known as a desert oasis, fashionable resort town and global mecca for innovative modern architecture. Its proximity to Los Angeles, which lies about 100 miles west, established Palm Springs as Hollywood's star-studded playground since the early 1900s, when movie contracts required actors to remain

within two hours of Hollywood studios. Located just within that window, Palm Springs became a favored destination for celebrities to relax and play, giving rise to the city's hip vibe and posh reputation. Weekend getaways turned into long-term stays for stars like Frank Sinatra, Cary Grant, Lucille Ball and many more, who commissioned the area's leading architects to design sleek, modern homes that mimicked the lines and accentuated the views of the surrounding landscape. Now

known as Desert Modernism or mid-century modern, this style now defines the unique look of Greater Palm Springs.

Among the founders of Desert Modernism were Bauhaus-influenced architects Albert Frey and E. Stewart Williams, whose legacies can be seen in numerous public and private structures across Palm Springs. Frey's most iconic contributions include the angular Palm Springs Visitors Center (originally the Tramway Gas Station) and many private

JOHANNES

A chef-owned restaurant in Palm Springs that offers modern European cuisine and a craft cocktail list. Johannes is particularly known for its new varieties of schnitzel, but the Au Pear martini is a perfect complement to their luscious sea scallops.

THE PINK CABANA

Located in Palm Desert's Sands Hotel and Spa, the Pink Cabana's hip vibe is a modern take on the great tennis and racquet clubs of the '50s and '60s in Palm Springs. The menu features fresh Mediterranean cuisine and a highly curated wine and spirit selection.

PARKER PALM SPRINGS

The Parker is a destination hotel in Palm Springs that houses two award-winning restaurants. Hit Norma's for a decadent brunch on an open-air terrace, and enjoy an upscale dining experience with snazzy evening atmosphere at Mister Parker's.



EAT



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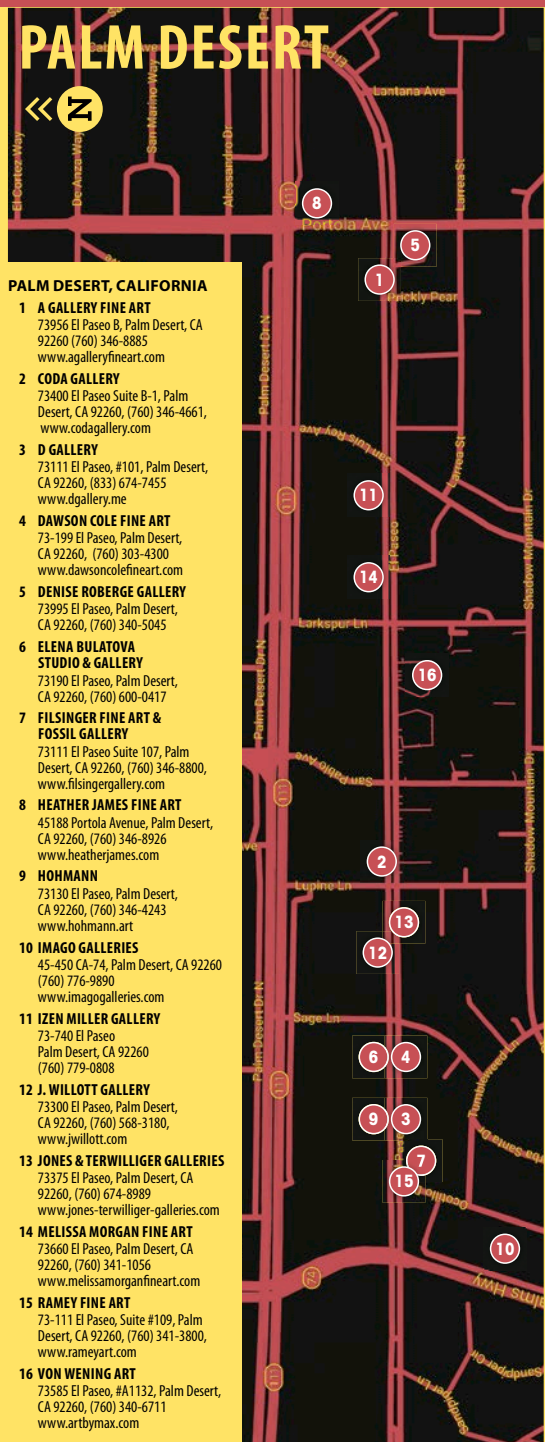
PALM SPRINGS



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PALM DESERT



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SIP



PURPLE PALM

Take happy hour poolside at the Colony Palms' Purple Palm Restaurant & Bar. Brightly patterned floor-to-ceiling wallpaper makes the interior just as inviting, with a glamorous Hollywood feel and Spanish-Moroccan flair.



WORKSHOP KITCHEN AND BAR

Located in the Uptown Design District of Palm Springs, Workshop Kitchen and Bar offers craft cocktails in a former movie house, renovated with an industrial chic interior.



LULU CALIFORNIA BISTRO

While LULU is a top stop for tourists and locals, it's also great for taking in the art collection of owners Jerry Keller and his late wife, Barbara. Several pieces are from Barbara's father and modernist painter Marvin Cohn.

homes in the valley including his own residence at Frey House II. Williams is behind the mountain-matching design of the Palm Springs Art Museum, and is perhaps most famous for Sinatra's Twin Palms Estate.

These structures and many more can be toured during *Palm Springs Modernism Week*, an 11-day festival celebrating the midcentury modern design and culture of Palm Springs. "A very grassroots group of architectural collectors, historians and philanthropists got together to form a committee to educate the public about the importance of our midcentury modern buildings and the architects who designed them," says *Modernism Week's* executive director Lisa Vossler Smith.

"And that's really how this event got started 15 years ago."

Modernism Week's annual February celebration draws more than 150,000 people for 350-plus events. Highlights include architectural tours through homes and buildings rarely open to the public, a smashing opening night party and the week's most popular event—the *Palm Springs Modernism Show & Sale*. Kicking off the *Week*, the *Show & Sale* offers 20th- and 21st-century furniture and art objects alongside the *Palm Springs Modern Design Expo*, which showcases cutting-edge home design products and technology.

In conjunction with *Modernism Week is Art Palm Springs*, a fine art fair featuring more than 70 galleries from Greater Palm

Springs and places like Asia, Europe and South America. Standout local galleries include **Jorge Mendez Gallery** of Palm Springs, **HOHMANN** of Palm Desert and **Melissa Morgan Fine Art**, who features the highly publicized light-based work of Anthony James. Outside the fair, the area's largest concentration of galleries can be found in Palm Desert's upscale shopping district on El Paseo, where a range of styles and artists are represented. **Jones & Terwilliger Galleries** has a more representational focus, while **J. Willott Gallery**, **Imago Galleries** and **Heather James Fine Art** are high points for contemporary collectors. "Because we're a resort town, we have a very diverse group of collectors here," says Josh Otten of J. Willott Gallery.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

February in Palm Springs is an art collector's paradise. Don't miss this month's events: *Modernism Week*, Feb. 12 – 32; *Modernism Show & Sale*, Feb. 14-17; *Art Palm Springs*, Feb. 13-17; Palm Springs Art Museum's *Alexander Girard: A Designer's Universe*, through March 1; *BoxoPROJECTS* Artist Events with Caroline Partamian and Ethan Primason, artists tea in Joshua Tree National Park, Feb. 23, and *Open House at Boxo*, Feb. 29.

PHOTO COURTESY: VISIT PALM SPRINGS



STAY



THE MOVIE COLONY HOTEL

One of famed local architect Albert Frey's legacy designs, this boutique hotel offers vintage décor in the Movie Colony neighborhood, where Hollywood stars lived and played in the 1930s to the 1960s.



ARRIVE PALM SPRINGS

Hip and new, ARRIVE is a stylish sleek hotel in downtown Palm Springs with contemporary design and posh poolside atmosphere. Also on-site are a coffee shop, ice cream parlor and outdoor dining.



SAGUARO HOTEL

Poster child of the "new Palm Springs" and quite possibly the world's most Instagramable hotel, the Saguro is colorfully designed with hues inspired by indigenous desert flora.

"So we see a wide girth of what's acceptable in the art world whether its hyperrealism or geometric abstraction."

This varied commercial art scene doesn't mean Coachella Valley lacks an artistic identity of its own—you just have to dig a little deeper, and in some cases drive a little farther, to discover it. Just as architects Frey and Williams looked to the land to shape Palm Springs' unique design aesthetic, Coachella Valley artists are forging their own modern art movement that amplifies the perceptual effects of the desert. Vast and barren with clean lines, harsh shadows and atmospheric light, the desert landscape is in and of itself a modern composition and for today's artists, serves not only as inspiration but

begs to become part of the work. Such is the case with *Desert X*, a site-specific exhibition that activates desert locations throughout the Valley with contemporary art installations. Previous years have drawn more than 300,000 global visitors, who embark on desert art odysseys to discover wide-ranging installations that address existential themes. *Desert X* occurs biannually in February with the next exhibition opening 2021.

"You may come in search of art, but you'll leave with a deeper understanding of the beauty of the desert," says Phillip K. Smith III, a Coachella Valley artist whose sculpture *The Circle of Land and Sky* was included in the 2017 inaugural *Desert X*. In this circular steel work, 300 angled

reflectors mirrored and abstracted the subtle shifts of the surrounding environment. "It created a space for viewing and listening to the desert with a heightened sense of awareness," says Smith, who is one of several locally based artists playing an important role in shaping the desert's eclectic art scene. Other artists of note include muralist **Armando Lerma**, another *Desert X* exhibitor who spearheaded the *Coachella Walls* revitalization project, and **Andrea Zittel**, an installation artist and founder of *High Desert Test Sites*, a series of immersive art experiences in nearby Joshua Tree.

"There's a grassroots swell that's happening here, and to big results," says *Palm Springs Life* editor Steven Biller.



PHOTO COURTESY ART PALM SPRINGS.

“That’s where the excitement is right now as far as the art scene—it’s out on the land and in the sand.”

While most desert art installations are ephemeral, some can still be viewed as permanent installations. **Jeffrey Gibson’s *Alive***, a ready-made sculpture from a wind turbine blade at the inaugural *Desert X*, can now be found at **Palm Springs Art Museum**. In addition to collecting contemporary desert artists like Gibson, Smith and Lerma, the museum houses an impressive modern collection with significant works by Helen Frankenthaler, Dale Chihuly, Anish Kapoor, Anselm Kiefer and more. A cornerstone institution, the museum is an important bridge between “low desert” communities in Coachella Valley and the more experiential “high desert” art scene in Joshua Tree, where artists escape to work on provisional projects or to rejuvenate their creative practices.

“The choice to live and work in the desert...well you might say it’s a little bit crazy,” admits Smith, whose Joshua Tree installation *Lucid Stead* went viral in 2013 and propelled his career forward. “But that’s the draw. The desert is this blank canvas—that’s why artists have always come here. They come to get away from distraction.”

While Joshua Tree’s art scene isn’t as neatly packaged or as easily accessible as a Palm Desert gallery stroll, there are many ways to experience it as a visitor. Discover the distinct tradition of found-object sculpture at the **Noah Purifoy Outdoor Desert Art Museum**, where 10 acres of assemblage art awaits. The **Joshua Treennial** in April is a weekend-long festival of art, installation and performance, and **BoxoPROJECTS** offers regular programming and exhibitions by local artists in residence. Both projects promote “contemporary art on the new frontier” and were

founded by Bernard Leibov, who orients high desert visitors with cultural tours at jtculturalexpeditions.com. Leibov is a longtime supporter of high desert artists; before moving to the area full time he worked as the deputy director of the Donald Judd Foundation in New York, where he hosted exhibitions of Joshua Tree artists out of his apartment. “I think there’s much more eclecticism of what’s being produced here compared to other places,” says Leibov of the desert’s draw.

Innovative architecture, a saturated gallery market, high-profile events and an unparalleled experiential art scene, Greater Palm Springs isn’t just a contributor to today’s contemporary art and design world, but on many levels is leading the conversation. From the early 1900s to today, one thing seems to be certain—the desert will never go out of style. ●