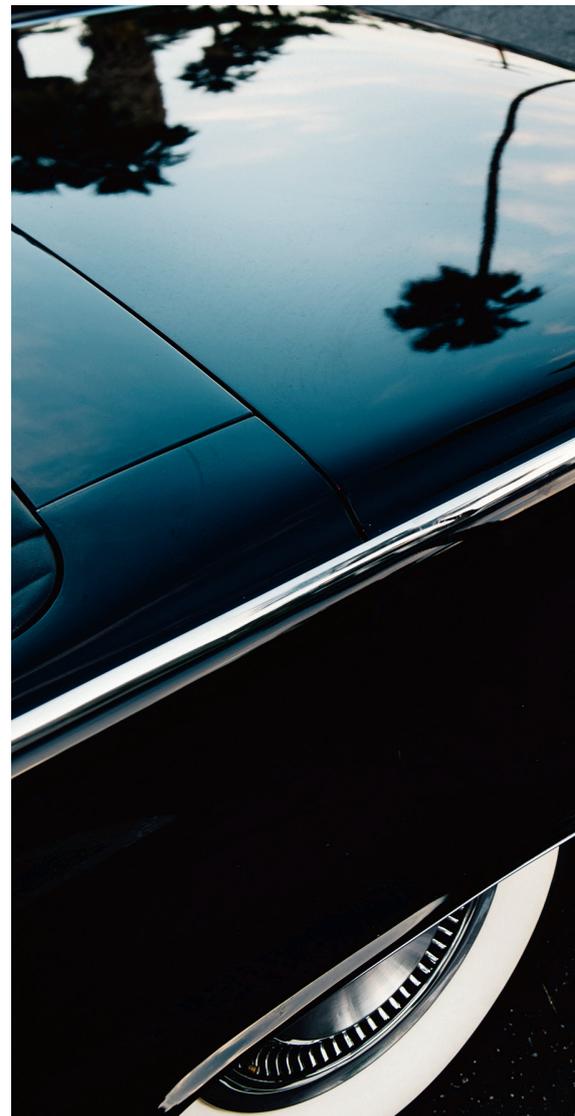


ONE PERFECT DAY

Palm Springs

REQUIRED BACK IN THE STUDIO AT TWO HOURS' NOTICE, THE STARS OF HOLLYWOOD'S GOLDEN AGE MADE THIS DESERT IDYLL THEIR PLAYGROUND. ANNE FULLERTON SOAKS UP THE GLAMOUR IN 24 HOURS.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSÉ MANDOJANA



POLITICAL COMMENTATOR Garry Trudeau once joked, “In Palm Springs, they think homelessness is caused by bad divorce lawyers.” The late Zsa Zsa Gabor, a former local and seven-time divorcée, would probably have agreed with him. While delivered in jest, the comment embodies a certain “live well, party hard” mantra that has underpinned everything from Palm Springs’ renowned architecture to its night-life since the city became a playground for Hollywood stars in the 1920s. “Southern California is a pleasure-based culture and that is really engendered by the climate and setting,” says Michael Stern, a former New Yorker who runs architectural tour company The Modern Tour and has written extensively about the area’s design and history. Team a taste for the good life with other-worldly desert mountains and a host of cultural happenings, including Coachella and the Palm Springs International Film Festival, and it’s easy to see how this desert oasis, about a 90-minute drive from Los Angeles, has become the West Coast’s hottest ticket.

(Left to right) Palms dot the city and its desert outskirts; classic cars embody the glamour of Old Hollywood; an example of the crisp lines and white palette of Mid-century Modern architecture





Order the wild mushroom, spinach and goat's cheese omelette at Farm (left); the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation (below)

09:00

Start your day in leisurely Palm Springs style at Farm (farmpalmsprings.com), a slice of provincial France inside a Spanish Colonial Revival mall. An outdoor corridor leads to a tranquil bougainvillea-covered patio with Parisian bistro seating – the perfect place to enjoy French press coffee and an omelette of wild mushroom, spinach and goat's cheese.

10:00

After breakfast, gaze at the surreal, lunar-like landscape of peaks visible from almost every vantage point in the city before immersing yourself in the region's ethereal beauty. Andreas Canyon on the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation harbours an unexpectedly lush oasis of palms that appear like a mirage along the hiking trail. In summer, pack your swimmers and a towel for a refreshingly cool dip in Andreas Creek. The reservation is easily accessible by hire car, taxi or bike but a Desert Adventures Red Jeep guided tour (red-jeep.com) will provide you with background on the area's rich Native American history. Stop in at Indian Canyons Trading Post for souvenirs and views of the largest natural palm oasis in North America and to watch hummingbirds feed within metres of the verandah.



Shiitake machaca tacos (right) served poolside at Ace Hotel & Swim Club (below); Palm Springs' most famous door (below right)



13:00

When the sun is high, retreat to the pool. The hip Ace Hotel & Swim Club (acehotel.com) is less than a 10-minute Uber ride from the Agua Caliente Canyons and has helped cement Palm Springs' reputation as a millennial hotspot. Pool access is complimentary for guests or you can purchase a day pass starting from \$US20 (about \$26) that lets you splash among the cool kids Instagramming their cocktails. Soak up the scene with a plate of shiitake machaca tacos from in-house restaurant King's Highway and pair it with a Frozen Watermelon Margarita.

15:00

After refuelling, rent a bike from Ace Hotel & Swim Club or a Genuine Buddy scooter from Scoot Palm Springs (scootpalmsprings.com) then zip around the city's spectacular Mid-century Modern neighbourhoods. Nearby Deepwell Estates is a stellar collection of low-slung homes and manicured lawns where Hollywood greats Tippi Hedren, William Holden and Loretta Young once resided. Next, head to Twin Palms Estates, where the butterfly-roofed Alexander homes came to define the Mid-century Modern movement. In the Indian Canyons district, you'll find the most photographed door in the city – the pastel-pink entrance to a house on East Sierra Way – though the owners have now banned people from taking pics. Design junkies should consider The Modern Tour (moderntour.com) for access to the interiors of gems such as Frey House II but if you're itching to escape the heat, head to the Palm Springs Art Museum (psmuseum.org) for its impressive collection of paintings, glass art, sculptures and photography.

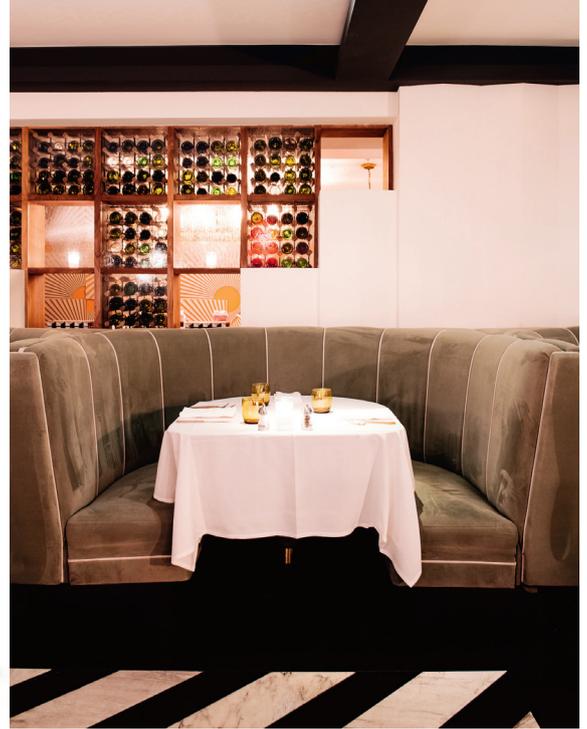


18:00

Drive or take an Uber to Palm Springs Aerial Tramway (pstramway.com), which will whisk you four kilometres through the air to the Mountain Station, where you can see the sun set across the Coachella Valley from the best possible vantage point. Take a jacket – it's unexpectedly cool at the top.

20:00

Where to dine is something of a dilemma, thanks to Palm Springs' thriving food scene. Frank Sinatra's go-to spot, Melvyn's restaurant and lounge at Ingleside Inn (inglesideinn.com), is an upmarket nod to the past, while local favourite Birba (birbaps.com) offers the best pizza in town. For a tasteful compromise between the two, try Mr. Lyons (mrlyonsps.com), a sophisticated cocktail spot and steakhouse. The mood lighting and green velvet booths complement a menu of old-school favourites, such as steak frites, as well as more contemporary fare.



(From top) Mr. Lyons has retro charm; the desert is home to a huge variety of cacti



Counter Reformation wine bar at Parker Palm Springs (left); Bootlegger Tiki's rum-based King Slayer cocktail (below)

21:30

Head to the Jonathan Adler-designed Parker Palm Springs (theparkerpalmsprings.com), an explosion of pattern and colour that feels more like an interactive art exhibit than a hotel. Ask for directions to Counter Reformation, the hotel's tiny 14-seat "shrine to wine". It has a clandestine, speakeasy feel that's heightened by the bar's antique timber confessional. Treat yourself to an expertly chosen drop and tapas – you can always repent later – before exploring the property's enormous gardens with a Negroni in hand (Mini Bar near the lobby does a good one).

23:00

Not ready to call it a day? Hit Bootlegger Tiki (bootleggertiki.com) and order anything on the menu with an umbrella in it. This flamboyant, gloriously kitsch cocktail joint, open daily until 2am, is always in the mood to party – like Palm Springs itself. ●

Flight path

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