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Joan Petruzzi, Teacher, CANCER SURVIVOR



Joan Petruzzi



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• GOOD TIMES •

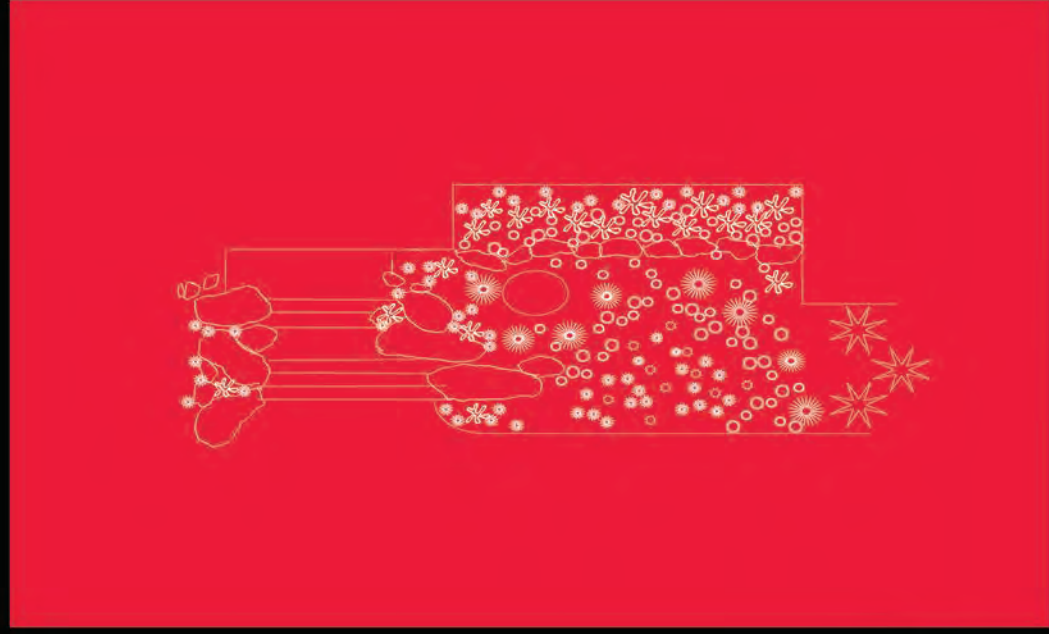
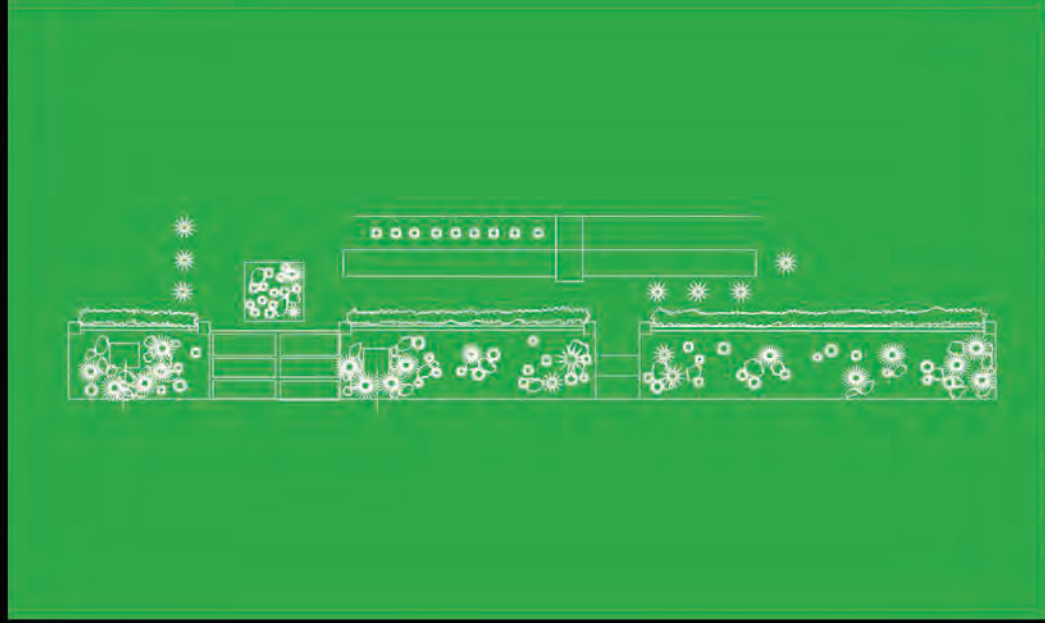
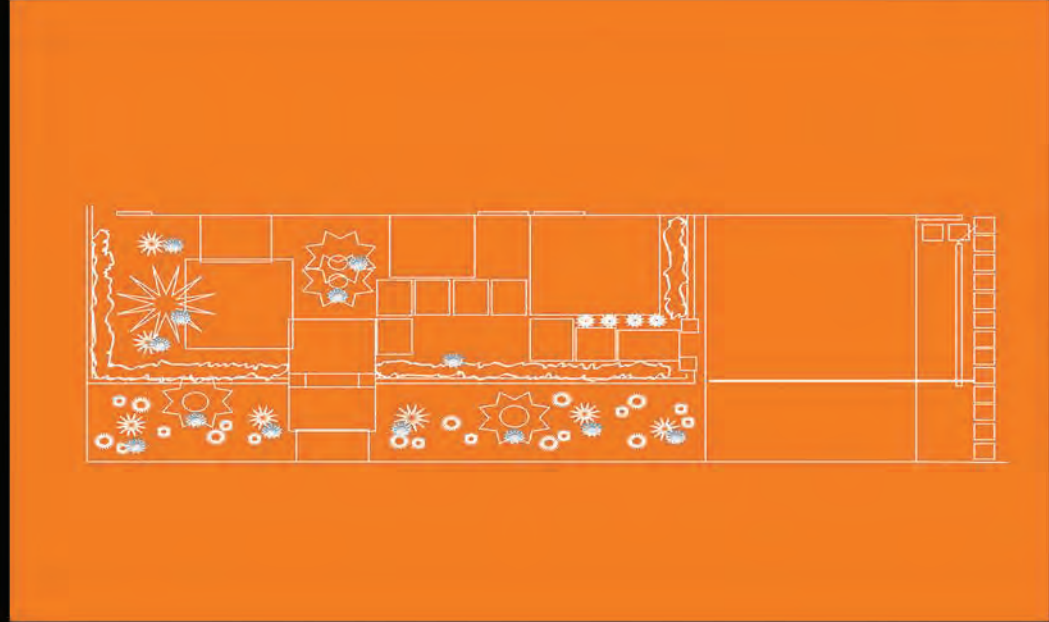
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RUGGED REDEFINED

Photographs by Kendal Riley
Styling by Sophie Mae

Inspired by sophisticated streetwear, we're all about elevating a bit of edge.

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Words by Kristin Scharkey
Photographs by Kimberly Utley

There's more to high desert homesteads than meets the eye.

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Words by Ruth Nolan
Photographs by Millicent Harvey



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DESERT

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 9

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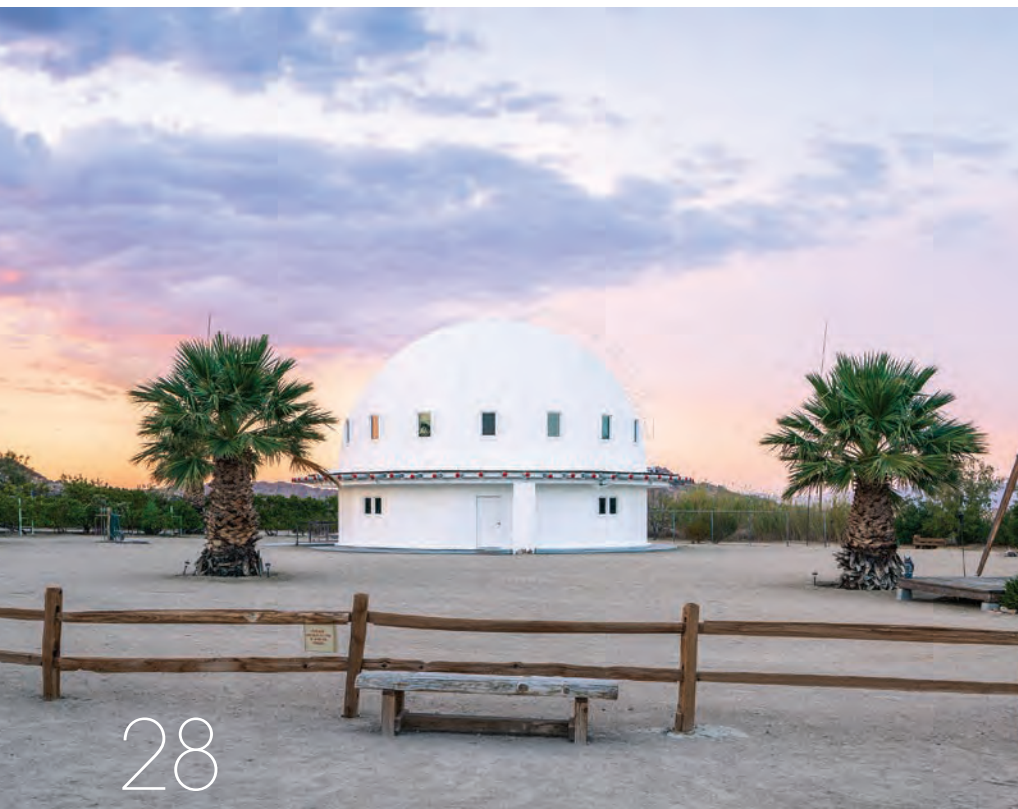
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ON THE COVER: Wonder Valley homestead.
Photograph by Kimberly Utley

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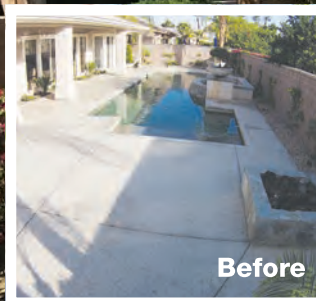


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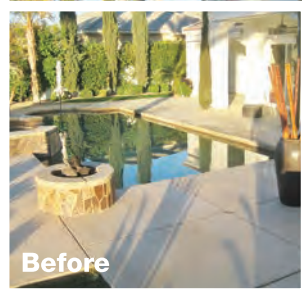
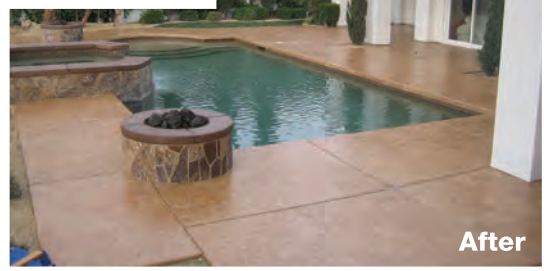
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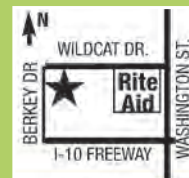


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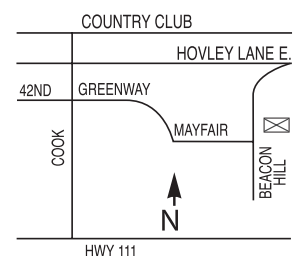
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S



o, I need to tell you a story about Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. It doesn't end well.

Picture this: me and the pup, side by side in the front seat of my two-wheel drive SUV, trembling as we cling to each other across the center console. You can hear my rear tires rotate as dust billows across the back window, even though the car isn't moving.

We're stuck on the Borrego Mountain Wash drop-off, a narrow set of stairs considered a daredevil obstacle for 4x4 vehicles. I didn't realize we'd careen right down the slope and into a ravine when I made a hard right turn at the top of the mountain, following a sign that said "One Way" next to another of a right arrow.

I untangle the dog's claws from my shirt and open the door to survey the damage. Ankle-deep in sand, I begin to push it by the fistful beneath my back tires – I'm wearing pink jeans and a white blouse. I came here to scout locations for the fashion shoot featured in this issue; little did I know I'd walk away wearing a new kind of "urban grunge."

It's about 115 degrees and my skin is starting to get sticky, but I can see flat ground about 100 feet down the hill. I figure if we gun it, we might just be OK. Back behind the wheel, I slam on the gas and we plunge into one ditch after another, the windows rattling as I press the dog's face against my belly. Each time, I am sure the car is going to bottom out. If you were wondering: This story ends in a \$400 towing bill.

When we reach the ravine, the only road out is down another, smaller, set of steps. They're rocky this time and on the first one, the car does a nose dive that I know we won't recover from. Both the dog and I have to climb out of the passenger side door to see that my back right tire is almost 3 feet in the air. Two park rangers, one CHP officer and three hours at the ranger station later, I find myself sitting in the front seat of a four-wheel drive Jeep with a tow truck driver who practically tiptoes down the steps that we barely traversed in the first place.

All that to say, sometimes there will be signs that you misinterpret; you're going to make mistakes that simply teach you not to make them again. Life can be a wreck and also just an accident. You can bet that when my crew arrived a week later, we stayed the hell away from that trail.

Kristin Scharkey, Editor
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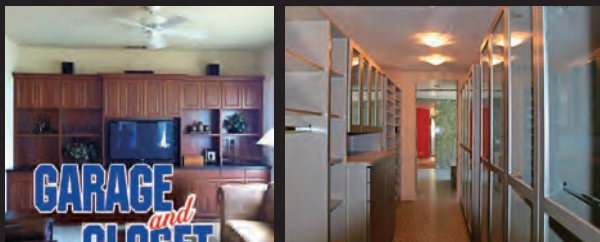
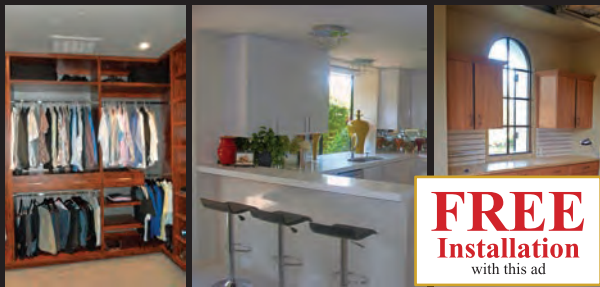


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CALENDAR

RAINBOW RALLY

November 1st-6th **PALM SPRINGS PRIDE WEEK**
Head to Palm Canyon Drive for the largest LGBT gathering in the Coachella Valley, featuring a diverse lineup of purveyors, events and entertainment. An equality concert on Nov. 4 precedes the Pride Festival, which takes place over two days Nov. 5-6. The week wraps up with a 10 a.m. parade on Sunday. pspride.org

URBAN UPRISING

4th

STREET

Celebrate urban art, music and fashion at this second annual festival curated by The Coachella Valley Art Scene. Held from 5 to 10 p.m., the Westfield Palm

Desert event is free for the whole family, and will feature more than 15 graffiti murals, food trucks and live painting. palmdesertstreetscene.com



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12th **DESERT LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY 101**

Learn how to take dramatic landscape shots (even with your iPhone!) from frequent DESERT contributor Lance Gerber as DESERT Adventure Club partners with Desert Adventures Red Jeep Tours & Events for a specially curated tour in the unseen desert. Your Instagram account will thank you. Tickets are \$115 at desertsun.com/desertadventureclub.

GRATEFUL GULPS

14th **WINE WE'RE THANKFUL FOR**

With the holidays approaching, it's time to finalize the vino you're bringing (or supplying) for the party. Hosted by Dead or Alive bar in Palm Springs, our second DESERT Adventure Club event features a private tasting of holiday wines and perfectly paired appetizers from Tipper's Gourmet Marketplace. Tickets are \$50 at desertsun.com/desertadventureclub.

RAISE A GLASS

19th **PROPS & HOPS CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL**

This fourth annual event offers the chance to sip beverages from West Coast craft breweries amid – or in! – vintage planes at the Palm Springs Air Museum. Held from noon to 5 p.m., the festival also will feature food and live music. Tickets start at \$35 and include one 6-ounce tasting mug and eight 4-ounce tastings. palmspringspropsandhopsfestival.com



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I'm Ready

(let's have a party)

A TRIO OF PALM SPRINGS BUSINESSWOMEN TAKE CASUAL CHIC TO A SOPHISTICATED – AND SPUNKY – LEVEL.

KENYA KNIGHT, NEERAJA LOCKART AND SELENA WALLACE

YOUR STYLE, IN ONE WORD?

Kenya: “California-esque.”

Neeraja: “Utilitarian-chic.”

Selena: “Menswear.”

FASHION INSPIRATIONS?

Kenya: “Rihanna, because I love how she walks to the beat of her own drum.”

Neeraja: “Grace Jones and Yoko Ono.”

Selena: “I love me some Kate Moss. I love me some Stella McCartney.”

SECRETS TO CAREER DRESSING?

Kenya: “I have a business in Los Angeles – a modeling agency, [Nous Model Management] – and then I have Soukie Modern here in the desert, so I feel like I get to wear an office style and then me of an outdoor [style]. ... Even though it's a modeling business, we send people around the world from an office so it's casual chic but you can also dress up if you want to. It's very freedom oriented. For Soukie, when I'm here in Palm Springs, I love to always be ready with a bathing suit on underneath what I'm wearing. If a pool moment happens – which it often does – I'm prepared. Cool and breezy, but still feeling resort chic.”

Neeraja: “I lived in San Francisco and L.A. and London, so I'm more of a city girl, which is a little bit harder to pull off here as [Saguaro Palm Springs spa director]

because I love suits and it's too hot six months out of the year to wear suits here. So it's probably California casual – jeans, T-shirts – you can always put on heels. Flip your flip flops off and put some heels on. But I love suiting. If I lived anywhere else, I'd be wearing a lot of suits. Not bathing suits – suiting with a capital ‘S.’ ”

Selena: “Do you want honesty? I sit at a computer at my home office also [running Wallace Model Management], so the majority of the time, either a bikini or my pajamas. I think being in fashion makes you not want to wear fashion, if that makes sense. Dressing up is such a headache sometimes, [though] I totally enjoy it for special occasions.”

FAVORITE PIECE OF CLOTHING?

Kenya: “I have a pair of vintage Levi's and they're red lines. I got them when I was in college in Berkeley, [Calif.], and I had already gotten them from a woman that had all jeans in the basement. They were already vintage, and I've had them now for so long. They've got holes in all the right places and they still fit me.

Neeraja: “My Porsche [Design] sunglasses. They are the most comfortable. I've dropped them, sat on them, they're indestructible.”

Selena: “One of my new bikinis [by] Reina Olga.”

CRAZIEST FASHION FAUX PAS?

Kenya: “I thought I was so cool at the time, but in the '80s when I was in high school, I was obsessed with all new wave

music. I had jet-black-dyed hair that I purposefully let be totally natted like Robert Smith of The Cure, and I would go to my Catholic school in my uniform with natted, ratted out black hair and red lipstick and red eye makeup looking like Robert Smith. My poor mom, she was really embarrassed.”

Neeraja: “I was in beauty school at 16 or 17 and allowed myself to get a perm.”

Selena: “Attempting to bring back leg warmers. I did it original because I'm old enough for that, but then attempting to bring them back probably in my early 40s – thinking that was cool, bearing in mind I'm from Canada. Don't know what I was thinking.”

FAVORITE DESERT BOUTIQUES?

Kenya: “In the same building where the Soukie shop is, there is a store called Lindy and Andrea [Vincent], the owner, has impeccable style. She has incredible vintage jewelry. ... Also Flo Modern Design and Bon Vivant, which is right next door. ... They're all excellent for vintage jewelry.”

Selena: “I haven't found a place where I'm like, ‘Oh, I need to go check out what's new.’ I don't think I know yet.”

Neeraja: “You know what, [Selena], you will because Elizabeth & Prince [just opened] a store in Palm Springs. They have great lines, they really do. It's one of the hipper, little bit more New York stores. And then Wil Stiles has great sunglasses. I've gotten some great accessories from there.” 🌱

—Kristin Scharkey



ON KENYA (LEFT): Norya Ayron kaftan kimono, Bernardo sandals, Soukie Modern bag. **ON NEERAJA (MIDDLE):** BCBG top, Goldsign jeans, Sergio Rossi shoes, Hermès bracelet, Sunday (cat). **ON SELENA (RIGHT):** Rag & Bone shirt, One Teaspoon shorts, Rock & Candy shoes, Candice Held vintage pendant necklace, Soukie Modern bag. LOCATION: SAGUARO PALM SPRINGS | PHOTO BY KENDAL RILEY

AUTUMN PALLETE

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HECTOR ESPINAL REVEALS
HIS FAVORITE LIPSTICK SHADES
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**Urban Decay
Vice Lipstick - 1993**

"This burnt orange lipstick is a great day lip color. It adds the perfect amount of pop without looking too overdone because of its toned-down shade. Lovely to pair with minimal eyeshadow and two to three coats of mascara."

3

**Kat Von D Studded
Kiss Lipstick - Prayer**

"Its deep merlot shade and matte finish are an impactful yet still feminine combination to wear during the day and or night. Pair this lip with soft eye makeup, allowing the lip to be the focus."

5

**Make Up For Ever
Artist Rouge
Lipstick - Black Red**

"If you're looking to switch up your classic red this fall, go for an oxblood shade to add a more sophisticated, red-carpet feel to your look. Great to wear at any special event or a night out on the town."

2

**The Estée Edit
Mattified Lipstick
ABT Last Night**

"This lovely berry color is a must-have addition to your red collection. Its rich color pay-off will add a nice pop to your everyday look. Best to pair with a satin finish nude shade and a pair of faux lashes."

4

**Marc Jacobs Beauty
Le Marc Lip Crème
Lipstick - Scandal**

"This creamy brick red lipstick is a must-have. It can be worn alone with just a fresh face for a real wow factor focus on the lips, or for something more daring, try pairing with a monochromatic eye with hints of red, too."

6

**Bite Beauty Amuse
Bouche Lipstick - Kale**

"Try something edgy, trendy and chic. This deep green hydrating lipstick will add unexpected flare to any look. It's a modern twist to your usual deep lip colors - plus the ingredients are good and safe enough for you to eat!" 🌱

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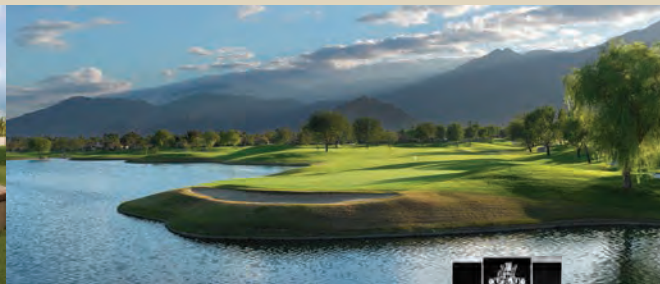
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PHOTOGRAPH BY KENDAL RILEY/STYLING BY SHANNON ONEIL



☑ CHUNKEY MONKEY RAW ICE CREAM

Makes: 2 ½-cup servings

- 1 6-inch pre-frozen banana, chopped
- 1 tablespoon raw almond or sunflower seed butter
- ⅓ cup frozen cherries
- 1 tablespoon cacao powder
- ¼ cup chocolate almond milk or rice milk
- 1 tablespoon chocolate chips or cacao nibs

Blend all ingredients except chocolate chips or nibs in blender on very low setting until smooth. May eat immediately or freeze for up to 2 hours (for consistency of ice cream) or days in half-cup servings. If freezing overnight or longer, let sit out for 5 minutes before eating. Sprinkle with chips or cacao nibs, and a frozen cherry or two before indulging.

☑ RAW CHOCOLATE PUDDING

Makes: 5 ¼-cup servings

- 1 avocado
- 8 medjool dates, pits removed
- 3 tablespoons raw cacao powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla powder
- 2 tablespoons organic blue agave nectar, optional if more sweetness is needed
- Water, as needed to blend

Blend all ingredients in vita mixer until smooth on low speed. Top with fruit.

☑ ALMOST FAT-FREE CHEESECAKE

Makes: 12 servings

- 3 8-ounce packages of Philadelphia fat-free cream cheese
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 medium eggs
- ¼ cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1 ½ cup sliced fruit

Preheat oven to 325° F. Mix cream cheese, sugar and vanilla with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Add eggs, and mix until blended. Lightly spray bottom and sides of 9-inch pie plate with non-stick spray. Sprinkle bottom with crumbs. Pour cream cheese mixture into prepared pie plate. Bake for 45 minutes or until center is almost set. Cool and refrigerate 3 hours or overnight. Top with fruit before serving.





MATTHEW

KENTON DREW JOHNSON

WHAT DREW YOU TO DEAD OR ALIVE (DOA)?

I was blown away by the design. [Co-owner] Anthony [Cioffi] did an amazing job. It's minimal but it's also everything you could want out of a small space. Everything is scrutinized and thought of, and hours went into every little detail. That's the same aesthetic that we have at my wine bars in LA. ... Now, I also saw room for growth because Anthony's a designer, he's not a restaurateur, so he didn't think of a few things that are really important. I made suggestions and since, they've added everything I've asked. I really, truly believe in what they do and they also believe in my – critique's not the right word – but I see things from a different perspective because I've been in the wine world going on 12 years.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THOSE CHANGES?

I knew they needed more seating so I suggested that Anthony design something excellent seating-wise, and he did. There's two new beautiful benches that adds another 12 people that can sit in the front of the place, whereas before there was just two chairs. There were not drink rails against the northern wall directly behind the bar, and now there's a big drink rail and two more going in so someone could have a place to put their drink down.

ANY OTHER UPDATES YOU'RE BRINGING TO THE BAR?

One of the things we're all really excited about is bringing new blood, new partnerships, new event operations to the bar from this whole new network that's opening up. We're happy that, down the

road, we'll be able to get a different echelon of winemakers in or maybe we'll get a famous person to come DJ just because I know them. The goal for DOA is kind of what you get when you go to Lisbon or kind of what you get when you go to Paris, or kind of what you get when you go to New York or San Francisco: There's certain little spots that anytime you walk in, it could be the most magical night of your life. You don't know who's going to walk in, you don't know who heard about it through their famous friend. There's going to be that element of, "F---, I better go check it out because who knows who's going to be there."

HOW WILL THE WINE LIST EVOLVE?

[Co-owner] Christine [Soto], for someone who's very new to the wine industry, has done a really good job at learning quickly. What she's done in a year, I think it's pretty progressive. The only thing that I personally changed since we started is I have a private label that I make with Brooks winery up in Oregon, and I do the blending for it every year for my wine bars. We did it in June this year, and we knew that [the] Dead or Alive partnership was taking place, so we did a Dead or Alive version of it. That is in-house, it's available. It's our own wine you can get nowhere else.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT WINE?

It's pinot noir made in the Eola-Amity Hills, one hour southwest of Portland – 100 percent pinot noir from three different vineyards that they source from. This last year in June when I was there, I got to meet all the growers from all the vineyards that they source from. The three vineyards I chose are the people who, not only do I think they're ahead of the curve on farming, but I also happen to get along with those three guys the best, so it's kind of a personal connection as well. ... [It's a] 2015 vintage, we released it the day we reopened on September 9. Pinot noir has a place. I was there on a Monday [in September] and it was 104 degrees at 5 p.m. If you're going to drink red wine, in my estimation, I would like it to be lighter, personally. Not everyone feels the same way but it's a desert wine. It's made to be enjoyed with warm weather in mind.

ANY PARTICULAR STYLES YOU'LL INTRODUCE?

I'm a big fan of wines from the Vinho Verde region in Portugal. We all think [that] because we speak Spanish in California, we all think it's VEE-NO VER-DE and it's not. It's VEE-NO VERD, you don't pronounce the 'e' at the end. I want to remind people of how you pronounce things in different languages, number one, and number two, I want to turn them on to things that, if you can't pronounce them, you'll never taste them. I'm trying to help educate people. If they never see it on a wine list, they'll never order it.

HOW IS DOA DIFFERENT THAN YOUR OTHER BARS?

We're more concealed in how many options we want to give, so we have to think even stronger about the choices that we have because we have such concise wine lists. That's going to change a little bit: We're actually going to offer a by-the-bottle list as well. That's a fun thing that Christine and I have been working on that we're going to, at some point, institute soon. That way, if you walk in, yeah there's

KANER

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Anthony Cioffi, Christine Soto and Matthew Kaner
PHOTO BY KENTON DREW JOHNSON

these great 12 to 15 wines by the glass, but if you want to buy a bottle of something, we'll have another 15 to 20 selections.

... A big goal of mine – and this is something Christine really cared a lot about – is just to elevate, from the staff outward, the ability to educate people and answer questions if they have them and engage about wine in a more wine-centric conversation.

YET PALM SPRINGS ISN'T REALLY A "WINE TOWN"?

You've got to keep in mind heat is a big problem. Wine is like flowers, it is delicate. You can't send non-refrigerated wine to Palm Springs for six months out of the year, it'll get ruined. So there's challenges with trucking, there's challenges with shipping because of that, just the access to raw material is a lot different than LA, San Diego, San Francisco, solely because of weather. ... Because I'm involved now, it will change the trade routes.

... The status quo, they have a similar approach, which is California heavy, lots of chardonnay, lots of cabernet. Things that people are familiar with. There's nothing wrong with that, that's business. ... But there are some incredible things happening as far as, let's say, The Parker's opening a wine bar now. ... If not for that, there's never going to be an elevation. There's never going to be people who know about things you have to go outside of your comfort zone to get. It's really amazing to watch it all rise, and Christine was a pioneer. I can confidently say DOA was the first wine bar there. People's definition of a wine bar is, sadly, not correct. ... A wine bar is a place that sells wine and that's a focus of theirs, and they have food because it makes sense to have food and wine together. ... I think for the vision of what her and Anthony have accomplished, it's pioneering. ... It's raising the bar. 🍷

—Kristin Scharkey

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1

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WELLNESS

Sonic *cure*

THE HEALING NATURE
OF A SOUND BATH AT THE
INTEGRATRON IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT.

WORDS BY **KRISTIN SCHARKEY**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **LANCE GERBER**





I'm not sure what to expect when I walk into the Integratron for a sound bath. A tuned set of high-pitched hand bells? A series of reverberating gongs? A chorus of angels like those I heard every year at Crystal Cathedral's "Glory of Christmas"? Desert locals were decidedly split on the plausibility of sonic healing in the weeks leading up to my visit: Some fell asleep during the hour-long experience, others called it "transformative."

"A sound bath is something between a lovely crystal bowl concert and a profound steep incline to the inner landscape," Integratron co-owner Joanne Karl had explained a few days earlier. "And everything in between for all the individual people."

About 1,000 visitors per month make the trek out to this white dome in the middle of Landers. Myriad join me as I walk through the door – tourists in khakis and polo shirts, and locals with long beards and flowy dresses. Sheryl Crow's drummer, Wally Ingram, is also in line. Our group is asked to remove our shoes before we climb up a small ladder to the second floor, where we're greeted by a towering umbrella of curved wooden beams interrupted by small rectangular windows. The perfectly acoustic space was first built in the 1950s by UFOlogist George Van Tassel as a vehicle for human rejuvenation, before coming under the present care of Joanne and her sisters, Nancy and Patty. Van Tassel claimed extraterrestrials gave him directions for constructing this all-wood dome, 38 feet high and 55 feet in diameter, on top of a geomagnetic vortex in the middle of the desert. "A man's Field of Dreams," Joanne calls it.

"George's stuff was never about the metal ships with the little lights," she explains. "His were always about fields of energy. Did you ever see the movie *Interstellar*? If you remember Matthew McConaughey when he was behind the shelf? My hair still stands on end when I see that. All I could think of was, 'That's probably how it really is.'"

According to its website, "Magnetometers read a significant spike in the Earth's magnetic field in the center of the Integratron." This, combined with its construction, results in what Joanne describes as "richer, fuller sounds." She and Nancy first started experimenting with recordings inside the dome in the 1980s – think ZZ Top and chanting monks. Back then, they jumped fences to get onto the property that had been sold to a mutual friend by Van Tassel's widow.

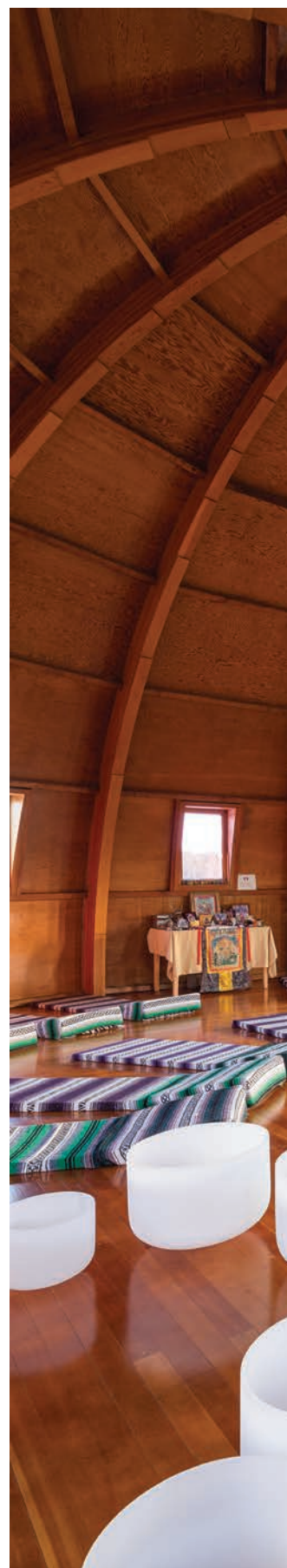
"We found that when we were in the building with the sound, we began to have a different experience

in our perception and our brain," Joanne explains. "Sound does connect the hemispheres of the brain, that's why you can get chills from a piece of music."

It was the quartz bowls that resulted in the most awareness and relaxation, as recommended by acoustic brain researcher Tom Kenyon. "Tom explained to us that we share geometry with crystal, so it really works on the neurology of the body, a very specific ringing tone," says Joanne, a former cardiac nurse. "The quartz bowls are very soothing to the brain and very easy to integrate." After years of visiting from the East Coast, the sisters jumped at the opportunity to "steward" the building when it hit the market in 2000. Shortly thereafter, it was a visit from TV personality Huell Howser – who encouraged the pair to utilize the sound baths as a "collaborative restoration project" – that they started hosting sessions for the public.

"We call this a 'conspiracy of grace' here at the Integratron," Joanne says. "... People very often come out and say, 'What can I do to help you?' [We ask them], 'Well, what's your story?' And they'll say, 'Well, I'm an expert in paint.' 'Oh really? Because we need an expert in paint.' ... It's the non-random nature of the open gate at the Integratron that really helped us to understand that we weren't the only ones that thought it was completely amazing. This is really something. It's a beautiful piece of architecture, it's in a unique location, it has very unique and unusual energies – those that George described as 'earth energy.' That's really been the basis of everything: creating a way for the building to get preserved."

Inside the Integratron, I take my place on a striped bed palette in the second of two rows forming half circles. At the other end of the building is a collection of white quartz bowls in various sizes across the floor. Nancy instructs us to sit before taking her place behind the crystal and says there will be 25 minutes of bowl playing before another 35 of recorded music. I lay my head back and close my eyes, sunlight beaming down onto my bare leg from the window above me. Silence falls over the room.





IF YOU GO

Group sound baths are by online reservation only; tickets start at \$25 per person at integratron.com

Then a low hum breaks the stillness. Like an eerie phonetics machine, the sound reverberates through my body with a guttural pull. It's as if I'm being split in all different directions, yet equally weighed down by the force of gravity.

It's a visceral expansion, the way the sounds fill each crack in my body. Different octaves, different keys – the variations swell in my chest. For you to understand where the Integratron took me, you need to know how I arrived: in pieces – wounds not yet turned to scars at the hand of a man I'd called my husband. When the sound of quartz permeates my body, I brace for an all-too-familiar feeling. And yet, I do not shatter.

Then the room goes black.

When I wake up, I'm one of two people still lying on their mat. At the other end of the dome, Joanne and Nancy talk quietly with Ingram and his family. It takes me about a minute to figure out where I am. I clutch my abdomen, my hips to make sure they're still part of me. I realize it's the first time in a year that sleep hasn't been as frightening as reality.

I stumble over to Joanne, and she hugs me like we've been friends for a decade. She's more – normal – than I expect, in a jean vest and pink scarf. We don't really talk about my experience; instead, she tells me about her family (her son and daughter-in-law, and Nancy's daughter and son-in-law now work on-site) and recalls old visits to the property. She reveals to me that Nancy has a saying, and she clenches both fists as she says it: "Let me be braver than this."

I say goodbye before descending the ladder and signing the guest book on the first floor. When I emerge from the building, the sun hovers over the western mountains. What is it about the sound bath that felt so relaxing and yet so utterly empowering?

"Our motivation wasn't to have people drink the Koolaid but to really get a sense of who they are," Joanne had told me earlier. "I'm really proud of the Integratron for being that self-aware beacon that non-randomly brings to it exactly what it needs. I respect it. I wish I knew how to do it, because I think it is the Integratron. Maybe it's George with some big control panel."

It's as if I was surprised by my own ability to accommodate the infiltration of my body. The sounds of the bowls unnerved me but didn't overtake me. As I drove down the dirt road away from the Integratron, I considered the possibility that perhaps I'd never been broken in the first place.

I can be braver than this.

Maybe tuning in to the inner landscape doesn't just force us to notice our role as both patron and recipient in the conspiracy of grace. Maybe it forces us to offer grace to ourselves. 🌱





SOUL NOTES

JEWELRY ARTIST
ADINA MILLS FUSES
CRYSTALS WITH
URBAN EDGE TO
CREATE ONE-OF-A-KIND
PIECES OF
WEARABLE ART.

WORDS BY **KRISTIN SCHARKEY**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **KENDAL RILEY**

I'm honest, I make a few assumptions about Adina Mills on the way to our first interview. I figure she's eccentric, for one, and most likely decked out in gemstones. I also prepare for what I estimate to be a high probability that she asks me to participate in a drum circle, like those held at the popular New Age women's retreat, Spirit Weavers Gathering, where her jewelry can be seen on many "sisters" who attend. Each of her pieces is an organic take on urban funk: Obelisk-shaped rings mount large chunks of white apophyllite and purple amethyst in hand-sculpted clay, while giant pendants made of quartzite or geode drip from chunky ropes and gold chokers.

In short, I expect Mills to be a reflection of her artistry, or at least how I perceive it to be.

So when the jewelry artist opens the door of her Landers home in a simple white dress and a single gold necklace, I couldn't be more surprised. With her hair piled high in two pigtail buns, she greets me with a warm hug and a soft hello.

We make our way through her living room to the kitchen table, three anxious dogs nipping at our heels offering stark contrast to her down-to-earth demeanor. A blue and green floral couch anchors the room and sits opposite one in faded Victorian yellow. On the far wall, a mirror covered in blue and yellow graffiti hangs next to a pencil sketch framed in gold. It's only after I drive away that I'll realize this space is a manifestation of the dichotomy that is Adina Mills: a woman walking the line between folk and high fashion, eclipsing avant-garde in her own understated way.

For the past three years, the artist has operated out of her Landers property; previously, she fulfilled wholesale orders for Free People, Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie from a motor home on a four-and-a-half-year, cross-country road trip. Her pieces have been worn by the likes of Lena Dunham and recent winner of NBC's "The Voice," Alisan Porter, to name a few, but these days she's slowed down the pace. Currently, she attends trade shows and continuously uploads batches of new jewelry for direct sale on her website. "I stay true to just creating," she says of why she doesn't prescribe to the notion of "collections" or being "on-season." "It really depends on the stones that I'm finding at the time, or the paint colors that I want to use."

Others have characterized her as a nomad, but Mills is strikingly centered to me. She keeps her favorite piece – a quartzite necklace anchoring a brazen amount of peachy-pink vintage chains – on a mannequin to the right of her work desk in a small studio off her bedroom. To the left is another worn by Lily Tomlin on Netflix's "Grace and Frankie." Throughout the room, shelves and drawers burst with the jewelry that makes up her own personal collection. If you look out the window, you can see scattered splatters of spray paint on old tires throughout the front yard.

"I've always been super into urban art, like graffiti, that whole underground culture," she explains. "I was a hip-hop head. I've



just loved spray painting and graffiti, so it naturally incorporated into my art work and into the jewelry."

She started utilizing the technique on wire-wrapped and beaded pieces after majoring in art history at UC Santa Barbara, but it wasn't until she decided to earn her teaching credential at Cal State Northridge that her pieces took on the look that they have today. Having never taken an art studio



class, she enrolled in sculpture in 2004.

"I was older than all the other kids and super into it," she recalls. "The professor took me under his wing and introduced me to this particular [clay] that I now use for my jewelry. He was introducing it to me for my sculptures, but I saw what it could do on the side."

She'd always used gemstones and crystals, but the material transformed the pieces into sculptural works of art. Ever since, her settings have continued to evolve – though the large-scale approach has stayed the same.

"Maybe it's a way to express something that I feel inside but can't get out any other way," she says of the sizing. "Inside, I feel loud and bold, but I don't really come across that way. This is the way for me to express what I'm feeling inside."

Truth be told, she doesn't

know much about crystal culture. Lost on Mills are the powers believed to be held by each gem. But there's plenty else to talk about – her time spent hustling in Manhattan to get her business off the ground, the stubbornness that keeps her from hiring any help. She's the kind of woman you want to sip whiskey beside on a porch at twilight, ask how she handpicks her stones each winter in Quartzsite, Ariz., so you can quietly observe a person with the audacity to be so unabashedly herself. Even those we deem "out of the box" can become conventionalized if we allow ourselves to assume, and Mills is anything if not vibrantly complex.

When I suggest that her work seems to have evolved in recent months – the ropes chunkier and pendants bigger, bolder – she agrees. Having previously outsourced the crafting of her ropes, Mills now hand-dyes each one herself. "I think because now the whole package is straight from me, it completes the whole picture," she says. "... I've experienced many changes in the past year. Because of these changes, I've been taking lots of new steps. Weights have been lifted, and now I feel like I am truly soaring."

I wonder if she knows that her favorite crystal to work with – quartzite – is an anchoring gem, thought to perpetuate positive change. Or that her second favorite, apophyllite, provides spiritual direction. Ask any New Age believer and they might attribute her recent artistic ascent to good energies. Ask Adina Mills, and she'll tell you it came from "somewhere deep within." 🌱

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1 Gather your materials. For one medium-sized candle, grab a medium pot or a bain-marie as well as one bag of beeswax, which is environmentally friendly and non-toxic; a bag of small dots will melt much faster than beeswax sold in large chunks. You can add coconut oil to the wax, as it can keep the wax from drying and cracking when it melts. It also helps bring down the melting point of the candle, but if you use too much, it will burn too quickly – a few tablespoons will do! You'll also need about one cup of dried fl w ers and herbs such as rose petals, rosemary and sage (which take about two to three weeks to dry), and a few drops of essential oils of your choice. I love lavender and sweet orange together but often create different varieties for the seasons. Lastly, you'll need a wick, matches and any container that can withstand the heat, like a mason jar. All items can be purchased at Michaels.

2 Prepare the container by using a beeswax dot to press the wick to the bottom of the vessel so that it is standing upright. For taller vessels, I will wrap the top part of the wick around a pencil to hold it in the center of the jar by balancing the pencil across the top of the jar opening.

3 Melt the wax in the pot or bain-marie, and add the coconut oil. In the jar, sprinkle in the fl w ers, herbs and a few drops of oils. Pour the wax into the jar and fill halfway. Let cool for 10 minutes.

Then, add more fl w ers and herbs, and fill the rest of the mason jar with the remaining beeswax.

4 Top off the candle with fl w ers and herbs. Let cool 1 hour, then trim wick to ¼-inch. Light and enjoy! 🌿





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TAKE ME TO THE COAST

VETERAN BAND TOUR MANAGER
RICK MARINO – WHO HOSTS
A TRAVEL TV SHOW CALLED
“STATE X STATE” THAT AIRS ON THE
PLANES, TRAINS + AUTOMOBILES
NETWORK AS PART OF DELTA’S
IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT –
DRIVES US TO **SOUTH ORANGE
COUNTY** FOR BEACHSIDE BEAUTY.

WORDS BY
RICK MARINO
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
KRISTIN SCHARKEY



There is a part of Orange County that has fascinated me every time I pass by on my way from LA to San Diego: the first time you see the Pacific Ocean heading south on Interstate 5. It has always been my favorite part of that drive, but I’d never stopped to check it out except to get some gas. I had no idea what I’d been missing. San Juan Capistrano, Dana Point and San Clemente have been there the whole time, begging for a road trip right in front of me.

I start the day in San Clemente, located at the southern tip of Orange County and known by locals as the “Spanish Village by the Sea.” My first stop is Casa Romantica, the original home of the city’s founder, Ole Hanson, to get a history lesson on the town’s origins. For a \$5 admission fee, you can tour the classic Spanish Colonial home, which houses a small museum, gardens and art galleries. The property is used for events but is open year-round – the architecture and view alone are worth a stop.

Next, I head to the San Clemente Pier to find the Fisherman’s Restaurant & Bar. Built as part of the pier over the crashing waves, it’s the perfect place to get the feel of this sleepy little beach town, watch some surfers and sip a few drinks at sunset. The pier is also an Amtrak stop, and you walk across the tracks to get to it. From here, you can mosey down the beach path alongside the trains to the surf breaks on the south end.

There are few cool hotels nearby as well: Beachcomber Inn overlooks the pier and has small Spanish tile roof casitas, while Nomads Hotel is a very cool, very small “surf” hotel with six rooms and bunkhouse. Nomads Canteen, located upstairs, is covered in surfboards and boasts 33 beers on tap. The menu is inspired by the owners’ travels; I recommend some poke.



Head up to Avenida Del Mar, and you'll find that this is the town's main street for shopping and eating. There is no shortage of restaurants in this city. I got so many recommendations from friends and locals that I have to go back to eat it all. To name a few: Brick for pasta and pizza, The Riders Club for burgers and beer, Cafe Rae for breakfast (it's owned by a retired rock and roll tour caterer) and MRK Public for sandwiches and salads. There seems to be no shortage of surf shops either – one cool spot I found was menswear boutique Ambson, a small store that shares space with Wake Up Coffee. Look for the eyeball to the right of the building on El Camino Real.

Driving north on Pacific Coast Highway along the beach, I leave San Clemente and head toward Dana Point. My first stop is Doheny State Beach. At the entrance is a small gift store and aquarium, which is very small but has a few fish tanks and a tide pool exhibit. The rangers and docents even give me the nickel tour, where I learn that this beach's surf spot was made famous by the Beach Boys' song, "Surfer U.S.A.," which includes a shout out to Doheny Way. As you pull in, you can see plenty of surfers out in the water. The park offers day use and overnight camping, with several spots right on the beach for RVs or tents complete with fire rings and picnic tables. Who knew?!

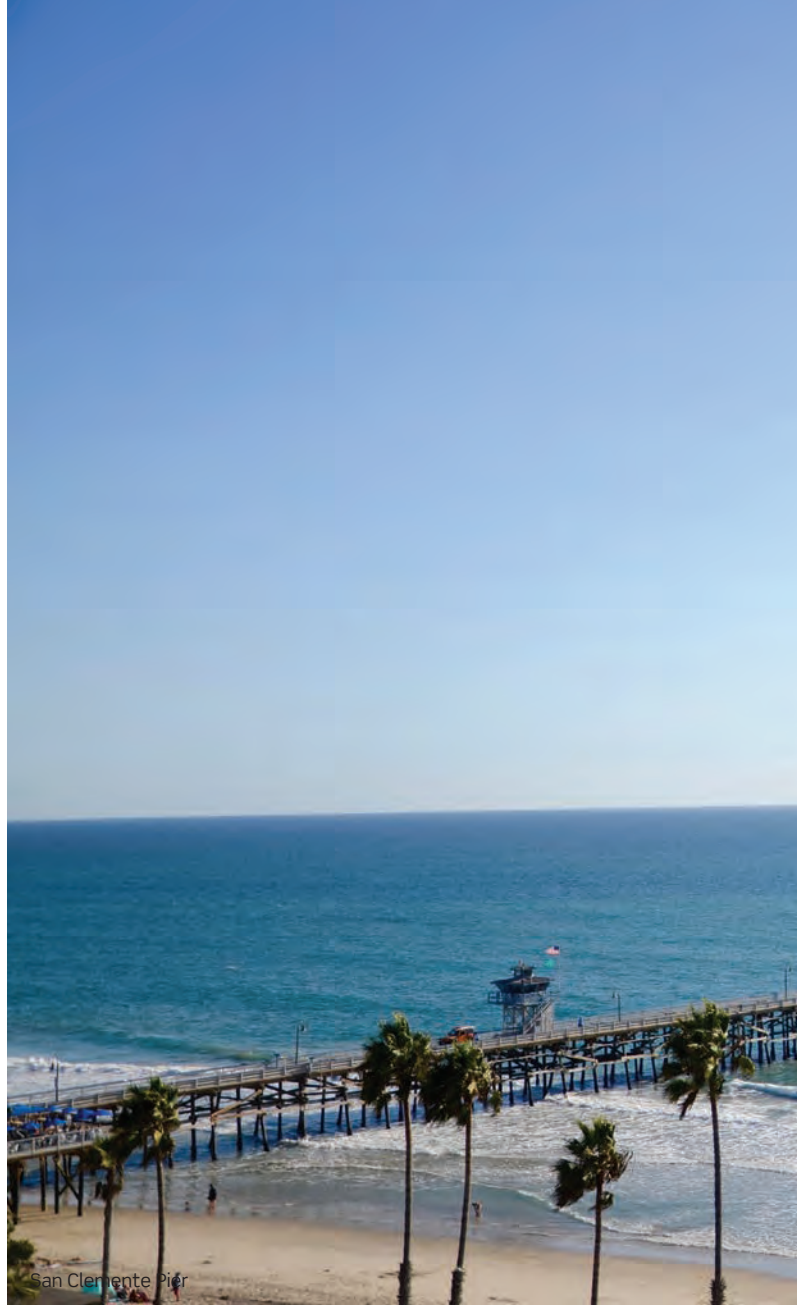
Past the beach is Dana Point Marina. I've since learned that this is one of the best places in California to go whale watching. With grey whales in the winter and blues in the summer, the spot is often home to these mammals gathering rather close to shore. At the dock, there are several charters available for sport fishing and whale watching, in addition to the Catalina Express. Several small shops and restaurants are located in the marina, and one that catches my eye is Turk's, a nautical themed classic – think dive bar meets greasy spoon, where one might order a Bloody Mary and fish 'n chips after a long night or a boat ride. Open from 7 a.m. until after midnight, the decor and vibe can't be beat.

At the north end of the marina is the Ocean Institute, which hosts school field trips during the week and is open for public tours of its tallship on Sundays. Walk toward the beach behind the buildings, and you'll find a staircase to the right that leads to an awesome secret beach cove and natural tide pools. There is no sign, just follow your instincts – this was one of my favorite discoveries on this trip!

I continue north for my next stop, San Juan Capistrano, which is famous for its Spanish mission founded by Saint Junipero Serra in 1776. I park at the Capistrano train depot located in the center of old downtown, and everything I want to do from here is within walking distance.

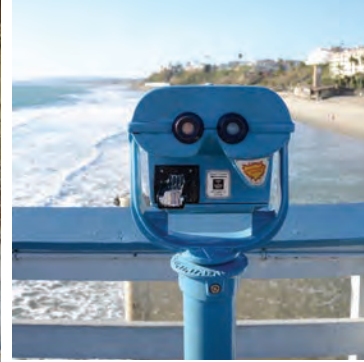
Cross the tracks into the Los Rios Historic District, one of California's oldest residential neighborhoods. Mostly private homes, there are some very cool restaurants, shops and galleries as well as a small park under the trees. One of the original adobe structures is surrounded by a butterfly garden, and the O'Neill Museum is definitely worth checking out.

At the recommendation of several folks, I eat breakfast at The Ramos House Café. Everything is made from scratch and features local organic produce – the owner lives in the house that





Mission
San Juan
Capistrano



Casa Romantica



was built in 1881. I have already told a few friends in LA to jump on the Amtrak for the day just to come and eat here. It was that good! Don't judge me by my order because I had to try as much as possible in order to write about it for you. My breakfast started with apple-cinnamon beignets (a house specialty), and then biscuits with homemade apple butter. These were followed by the Flannel Hash, with roasted root vegetables and tater tots, topped with a poached then fried egg and citrus crème and orange juice squeezed to order. Ok, ok, it was a lot of food and was big enough to share for sure. I hear the weekends are pretty busy, but this brunch is off the hook.

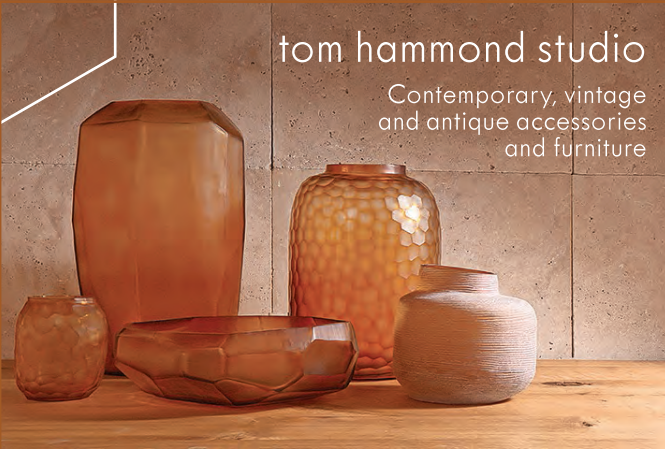
Back across the tracks, I am off to see the mission. If you grew up in California, you learned all about the Spanish missions along El Camino Real, otherwise known as "The King's Highway" in grade school. I have been lucky enough to visit a few of them and grew up very close Mission San Gabriel Arcangel near LA, but San Juan Capistrano is now my personal favorite. I understand why it is considered the "Jewel of the California Missions." As soon as you enter, it feels like you're transported back more than 200

years. The grounds and gardens are perfectly manicured, and each of the buildings contains museums and displays – you can easily spend a few hours here. There are guided tours available, or you can just stroll around at your own pace.

Across the street from the mission is a cool little shop called the Capistrano Trading Post that is worth a look, and further down the road is really big antique store called The Old Barn Antiques Mall – it's packed floor to ceiling with everything you can imagine. Right next door is Swallow's Inn, a classic country music bar, and it reminds me of a honky tonk in downtown Nashville. My last stop is for a snack at El Adobe de Capistrano, an old school Mexican restaurant that opened in 1948. It's part of a building that includes an adobe home dating back to 1797. The food is classic California-style Mexican – the perfect ending for this road trip to the birthplace of Orange County.

Millions of cars pass by these towns every day, and I wonder how many know what they are missing. I honestly forgot that I was even in Orange County – who knew it was just road trip (or train ride) away?! 🌱

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YOUR LIFE, IN PICTURES



Clockwise
from top left:

"Early evening,
camping."

— Andy Bilinski

"Succulent planter
at Dome in the
Desert."

— Ally Sands

"The sun bursts
through the clouds
over the Big Horn
Mountain range
during a brief rain
shower in Landers."

— Melanie Buck

"Pioneertown
Wilderness
Preserve."

— Charlez Malasaña

"Handstand drills
every day!"

— Georgina Meister



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the desert! Send
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Gail lives LA QUINTA



Gail Gallaudet of Gallaudet Properties and HK Lane/Christie's International Real Estate is an agent with over twenty years experience, specializing in the La Quinta Real Estate Market. Gail's blog is a trusted source of information, read by residents looking for market updates and community highlights from her insider's point of view. Let's briefly check in with Gail...

Q. What factors made you choose La Quinta for your home, and why would others want to consider it compared to the rest of the valley?

A. We immediately fell in love with La Quinta for so many reasons. The area had a new feeling compared to the other cities, yet there was so much charm all around with Old Town and the La Quinta Resort. The golf clubs were newer and yet seemed to be less expensive than some of the other areas and that is still true today. Many of the HOA dues, prices of homes, and prices of golf clubs are less expensive in La Quinta than in other parts of the Desert, and yet the designs are newer. La Quinta has grown since we first moved here to include wonderful restaurants, boutique stores, and all the amenities of the box stores nearby on Highway 111.

Q. Do you have a mentor or role model? If so, tell us about that person/relationship.

A. The first broker I worked for was a former Olympic skier, who due to his impeccable reputation, had built the largest and most successful agency in Vermont. He taught me that knowledge and integrity are the two most important elements to success, and that to represent anyone in real estate, I must have a thorough knowledge of their home, their neighborhood and the local market. To this day I think of him all the time with gratitude for the training that he gave me.

Q. Any favorite charities or causes you are proud to champion?

A. I am currently the treasurer of the Friends of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Coachella Valley. Through the years I have supported various organizations, but never before have I felt so privileged as I do now with the Boys & Girls Clubs. The positive stories from past and present boys and girls regularly brings tears to my eyes. Some say that their time with the Clubs have kept them away from gangs and prison and instead opened up educational scholarships and opportunities to pursue careers in subjects they learned while at the Clubs.

LA QUINTA MARKET UPDATE: 4 TOP PROPERTIES



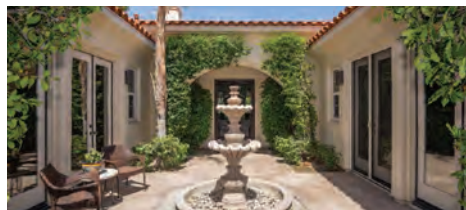
- 2577 Square Feet, 3 Bedrooms, 3.5 Bathrooms.
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- 2833 Square Feet, 3 Bedrooms, 3.5 Bathrooms.
- Panoramic Mountain & Golf Course Views.
- Unbelievable Large Corner Lot.
- 79485 Mandarin, La Quinta - **Offered at \$750,000**



- 2439 Square Feet, 3 Bedrooms, 3 Bathrooms.
- Triple Fairway Southern Mountain Views.
- Perfect Size for that Vacation Getaway.
- 79605 Mandarin, La Quinta - **Offered at \$640,000**



- 2762 Square Feet, 3 Bedrooms, 3.5 Bathrooms.
- Unobstructed Double Fairway Views.
- Former Model Home / Furnished.
- 79020 Citrus, La Quinta - **Offered at \$633,000**



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NOT FORGOTTEN

There's more to
high desert homesteads
than meets the eye.

WORDS BY KRISTIN SCHARKEY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIMBERLY UTLEY



Stand in the middle of an abandoned high desert homestead. Go on, do it. Notice that heavy kind of silence like a warm embrace? Walk over to a wall, look out at the desert through the cracks in the wooden slats.

Feel the floorboards creak beneath your feet?

There is mystery here in the rawness, in the wild history – the storm before the calm. Soon, they may come with concrete pours and drywall to fix up these small sanctuaries. Thing is, faith is often forged in the unknown.

Those crooked beams, this door – they were born of the Small Tract Act of 1938. Cabins built on 5-acre plots deemed “disposable” by the Bureau of Land Management. It’s funny: The homesteads’ birth eliminated the word used to describe their confines *disposable*. It’s the same one used to call for their death and resurrection now.



Some were wiped out in the '90s: Using a federal grant, San Bernardino County demolished those considered “dangerous structures.” At present, one might be purchased for as low as \$15,000. A cottage Airbnb industry both preserves and threatens to make them – in their original form – disappear.

And yet, a few remain.

Though scattered across the desert, their naked bones continue to be salvaged – unrefined beacon in a society built on constructs of beauty. “I used to go up there and just stand in the cabin,” says Rancho Mirage playwright Jill Kroesen. “There’s something so wonderful about the [fact] that you’re sort of sheltered, but you’re not.”

Peer past the beams and feel your eyes relax into the horizon; stare up through the holes in the roof and watch stars rain down. Kroesen lived in New York for nearly three decades and rode her bike to George Washington Bridge to get away from the chaos of the city. She found the same solace in two decrepit rooms on the outskirts of town.

She toyed with renovations. Thought about putting the Landers property up for rent. Ultimately, Kroesen says, she decided against it. “It’s kind of wonderful the way it is.”

Drive down her dirt road around 6:30, watch as light filters through the fractured back wall at dusk. The sun refracts a wild beauty that emanates off the nails peeking out of hardwood; inside, you’re as much a part of the landscape as it is in your periphery.

“It’s unspeakably stunning – the Bighorn Wilderness mountain range back there at sunset,” says Dana Desselle, who buys and sells homesteads through her company, DesertLand.com. “It’s just something to behold. In fact, at [my renovated Wonder Valley homestead], Wonderama Ranch, I was looking to get a pew to put on the front porch. I really felt like it was a very spiritual view.”

Stand on the deck and revel in the panorama, or take a moment to walk the grounds and scour the skeleton up close. You might notice a shoe or two left on the premises; watch your step in sand littered with wild gourds and hidden ropes.



It's Kind of Wonderful

"Sometimes you come across a cabin that is a still life from 1968, with all of Aunt Harriet's furniture," says Desselle, who still has the original 1953 deed to her grandfather's Johnson Valley land. "Her glass ashtrays, her lazy Susan's – dozens of *National Geographic's* that have 50 years of dust on them. It's in those windows of discovery that a homestead really speaks to you. You can tell how it was loved, and by who. Often, extended families would buy parcels right next to each other."

Look at an overhead satellite map, she says, and you can see the worn path that they took between the two.

What is it about a homestead's history that makes us more aware of our own identity, makes it imperative to assert? Or is it simply the sense of freedom found in structures stripped down to just wood and dirt?

"There's a lesson to learn when you're standing in front of the cabin that's a skeletal image of its former self," Desselle says. "It's a lesson of the desert. It accelerates time and it accelerates decay, and you have to have the fortitude to stand up to it. It just shows you, I think, in many ways how perishable life is."

Inside these homesteads, there are no secrets – both light and dark can filter through. Here's the sound of silence, yes, but there's also the sound of resilience. It's what the desert teaches you. 🌱



the way it is.

— LANDERS HOMESTEAD
OWNER **JILL KROESEN**







INSIDE THE IMAGES

After purchasing a Joshua Tree homestead earlier this year, photographer **Kimberly Utley** began to document it and others around the high desert. We sat down with the artist to learn more about her inspiration.

WHY DID YOU START THIS PROJECT?

What initially caught my attention was that I was buying one and felt it necessary to have a grasp of what these little cabins were about. Once I began to understand their history, why they were scattered about and their purpose, my mind ran wild. What were these people planning on doing with their 5 acres and 200 square feet? Did they have a plan or just jump at the opportunity to own inexpensive land? That's what started it all for me – the curiosity and wonder – the chance to create my own narrative for these cabins.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL WHILE PHOTOGRAPHING THEM?

I am overcome with a feeling of freedom. I'm free to mentally disassociate myself from my daily norms, and from what I thought I knew about myself. I'm not an outdoorsy type, not at all. Camping to me is a day on the beach,

hiking is dusty and hot – I can invent a million reasons to turn my nose up to the idea of these homesteads and land, but none yet seem to be able to outweigh the fact that I just really like them.

WHY CAPTURE MORE THAN YOUR OWN?

I like paying attention to things that otherwise would be ignored or forgotten. There's so many bizarre correlations between them, for example. Most of them have an old sun-rotted shoe – not a pair but a shoe. Depending on the elevation, some have wild gourds growing around them. Mine happens to have a microwave, but there isn't any electricity on the property. It's these odd little things that keep my interest peaked.

I feel like I'm almost taking their portrait. Giving them the deserved time and attention needed to present them in the best light possible. We tend to look away from things like this – they

aren't taken care of, they are ugly to some, and are pretty void of purpose at this point. I try and capture the respect that they deserve. They weren't created to just then be abandoned. There was a purpose for these cabins – time and circumstances just weren't able to uphold the initial intentions.

WHY DOCUMENT THEIR RAW STATE?

It's real. They represent the effects of passing time. We can all be fixed and masked (rehabilitated) to become what we want others to see, but what lies beneath is what really exists. Our core is who we really are. Whatever anyone chooses to do to these cabins, whether it be fix them up or tear them down, the current state they are in is honest and true to what they are. My little wooden souls.



What is “The Second Growth”?

By David Thatcher, CFP®, Vice President & Senior Financial Advisor

“The Second Growth” may sound like an unusual name for our wealth management process. However, after years of counseling individuals who have reached a point of financial independence, we believe the term perfectly describes the stage of life our clients are experiencing.

Two Stages of Growth

A tree grows in two distinct phases as you can see from the dendrochronology (a fancy way of saying tree rings) of a tree above. Each ring represents a year of the tree's life. A tree's dendrochronology, like a human fingerprint, shows the unique differences among every tree. As you examine the tree rings, you will notice signs of two distinct phases of growth.

The wider rings in the middle indicate a period of primary growth. During this stage, a tree grows rapidly with roots reaching deep into the soil and branches, shooting fast and far into the sky. After a tree has come to a form of maturity it naturally evolves into the second stage of growth as indicated by the thinner outer rings. The tree has now developed greater width and girth to withstand the elements and foster a long, healthy life.

Our clients have experienced their own unique “first growth”. They were fortunate to have benefited from rapid growth in their financial lives to get them to where they are today. While all of our clients have their own individual objectives, many have now had a change of focus. In the past they may have taken risks in pursuit of rapid growth but now have a growing desire to protect what they have and harvest the fruits of their labor. We call this period The Second Growth.

Planning For Your Second Growth

The Second Growth can be a period of great enjoyment and a time of tremendous personal growth and fulfillment. However, this stage of life may also present many new and complex issues.

Moving from the accumulation phase to the distribution phase of your investments takes a specialized approach in risk management and income planning. Financial planning issues, such as when to take social security and planning properly for healthcare and long-term care, need to be addressed. Estate and tax considerations are unique during this phase as well. During their Second Growth some are caring for aging parents or the special needs of children.

Mistakes made due to improper planning during this stage of life can be devastating.

The Second Growth Process™

The Second Growth Process™ was developed to address the unique needs of our clients during this most critical stage of life. This process was designed to provide peace of mind and certainty in meeting their needs.

Our “Second Growth Process™” has four steps:

1. Understanding Your Financial Dendrochronology

We listen to you. Understand your financial dendrochronology means really knowing you, where you have been, and where you want to go. What are your personal values and aspirations? What’s on your bucket list? We want to know.

2. Assessing the Gap

After we have a thorough understanding of what you want to accomplish, we walk you through an educational assessment of any gaps that may exist in your plans.

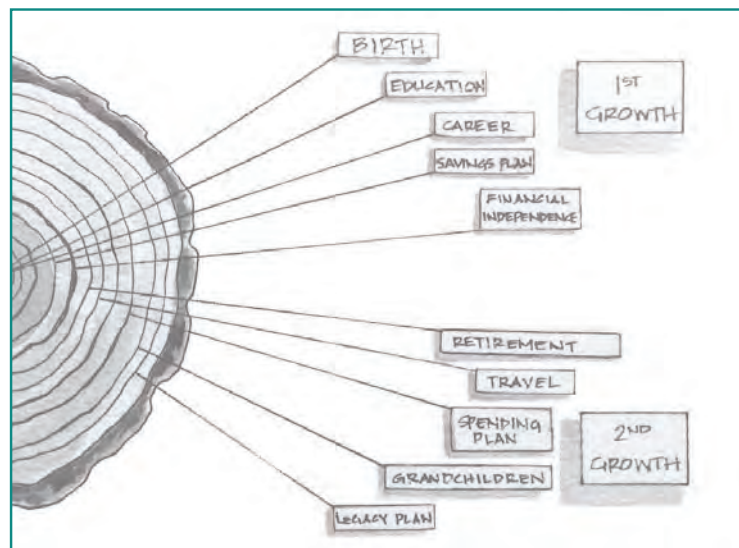
3. Your Second Growth Blueprint

We bring our understanding of you together with a thorough analysis of your financial position to create a customized, detailed blueprint of what you need to do in order to meet your goals. We take a collaborative approach, working with your tax and estate advisors to address all areas of your financial life.

4. Ongoing Review

As your needs and goals evolve over time so should your financial plan. We meet with you regularly to make sure you are on track and that your finances continue to reflect your desires.

If you are in this second growth stage of life, we would love to sit down with you and make sure that your finances are working for you. To schedule a



complimentary financial consultation, or to get a second opinion on your current portfolio, contact one of our offices today.

About The Cypress Group

The Cypress Group is a division of Integrated Wealth Management, an independent RIA firm providing financial planning and investment management to high net worth individuals, families, business owners, and institutions. With an 11-person team of professionals with diverse backgrounds and extensive experience and qualifications, The Cypress Group is uniquely qualified to serve a broad range of client needs. Their experience and expertise act as a foundation for their client service process, The Second Growth, which focuses on efficiently protecting, growing, and transferring to their loved ones the wealth and legacy a person has already built. With offices in Palm Desert, Newport Beach, and Anchorage, the firm serves clients across the country. Learn more by visiting www.iwmgmt.com/cypress.



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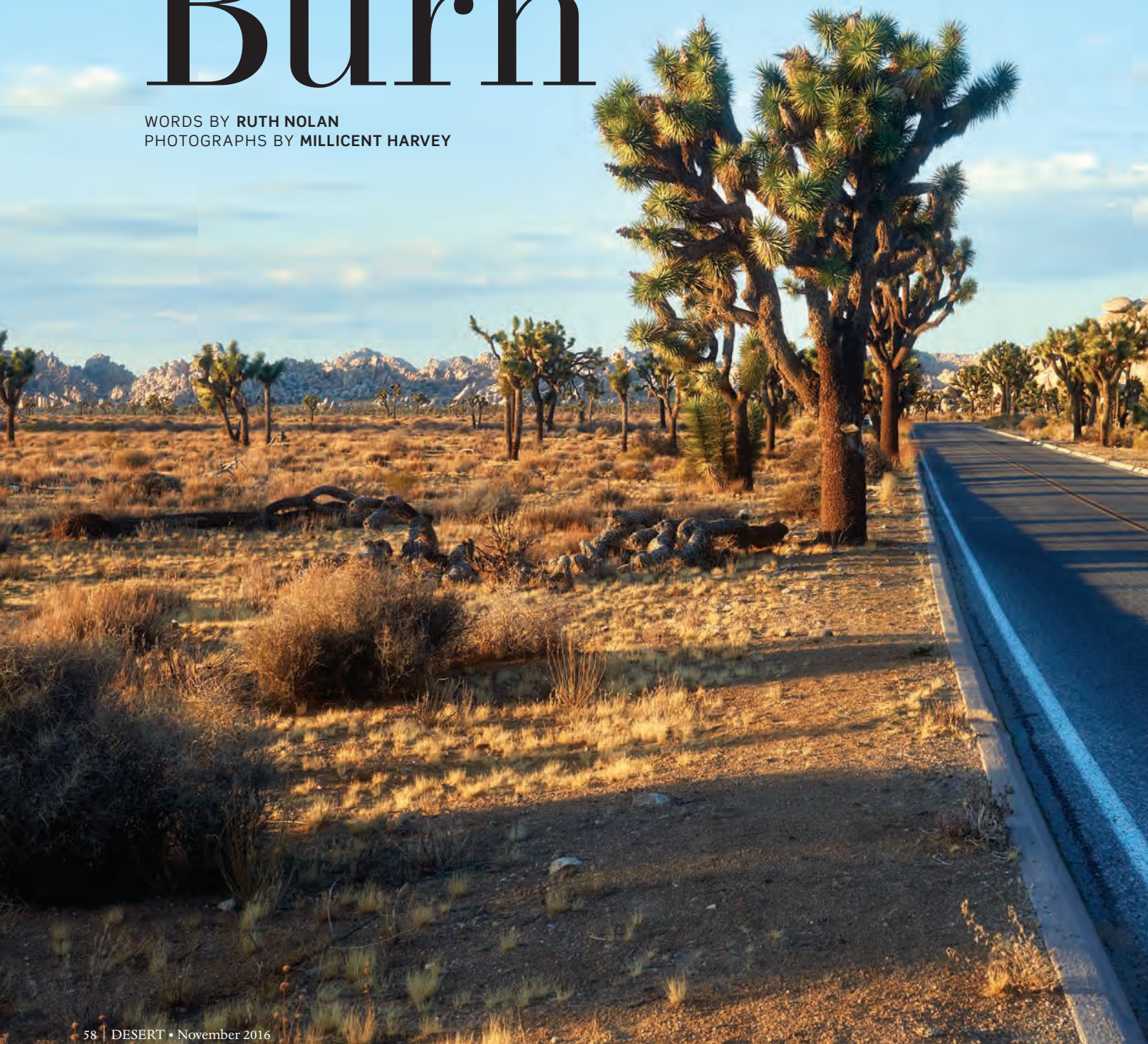
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PERSONAL **ESSAY**

Memorial Burn

WORDS BY **RUTH NOLAN**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MILLCENT HARVEY**





Editor's Note: This essay has been adapted from a previously published excerpt from Ruth Nolan's forthcoming book, "Fire on the Mojave: Stories from the Deserts and Mountains of Inland Southern California," supported by College of the Desert.

*"In the beginning ... they laid a woman, Ninmaiwaut (palm), on her back, and Aawut (horsefly) took a wooden spindle and drilled her. First blood, then fire came forth. This woman then became a palm tree."
— Cahuilla creation myth, Lowell John Bean and Katherine Siva Saubel, "Temalpakh: Cahuilla Indian Knowledge and Usage of Plants"*

It's a windy March afternoon, and I've just driven into Joshua Tree National Park. A sign by the road catches my eye: "Today's Fire Danger: Moderate." Perfect.

On both sides of the road, I'm surrounded by craggy boulder-riddled vistas and, of course, ubiquitous Joshua trees. Spring wildflowers pop up along the roadside: Fields of yellow desert dandelions, sultry pink sand verbena and iridescent purple lupine have turned the usually tan-colored desert expanses – made even drier and bleaker in the past few years from the ongoing drought – into a beautiful symphony of passing color. Even the Joshua trees are tipped with fat white blossoms at the outermost reaches of their thick-thorned crowns. It's hard to concentrate on driving, with all of this beauty surrounding me.

But I'm not here to see the wildflowers of this year's so-called "super bloom," spawned by last October's monsoon rains and a favorable early January rainfall. I'm here to look for evidence of desert wildfires. I'm here to see up close the scars they've left behind.

This morning, I was in Banning to interview Ernest Siva, a Cahuilla-Serrano elder and culture bearer, and one of the last speakers of the Serrano language. I'm working on a sabbatical book project, "Fire on the Mojave: Stories from the Deserts and Mountains of Inland Southern California," which includes a chapter on how Cahuilla, Serrano and other desert Indian tribes traditionally managed ecologic resources critical to their survival. Having served as tribal historian and cultural advisor for the Morongo Band of Mission Indians since 1996, Siva tells me that the famed palm tree oases in Palm Springs and other areas across the Coachella Valley – which have been inhabited by indigenous people for centuries – always had a keeper.



Someone in the tribe was responsible for tending to the precious natural resources that provided food and shelter critical to earlier Indian people's survival, he explains. To keep the oases clean, the undergrowth among the palm trees was deliberately burned to cleanse the grove from pestilence and help keep the trees healthy. To this day, fire continues to play an important role in Cahuilla and other Indian tribes' cultural practices.

I think of this as I glimpse something otherworldly shimmering through the lens of magic Mojave time – an open stretch of desert, void of trees. The afternoon light is magnified and bent by the wind, or so it seems, and I see what looks to be giant littered mammal bones strewn across the empty landscape.

I veer off Quail Springs Road and park next to a small pullout, pushing my door open against a burst of wind before crawling out of the car with my camera. I stumble into the fierce weather over to a metal kiosk with the heading, "Memorial Fire." According to the kiosk, nearly 14,000 acres burned here for three days in late May 1999, ignited by a passing afternoon thunderstorm. It's a lonely scene. Other cars race by as their drivers head toward the park's popular destinations. I'm the only one out here today.

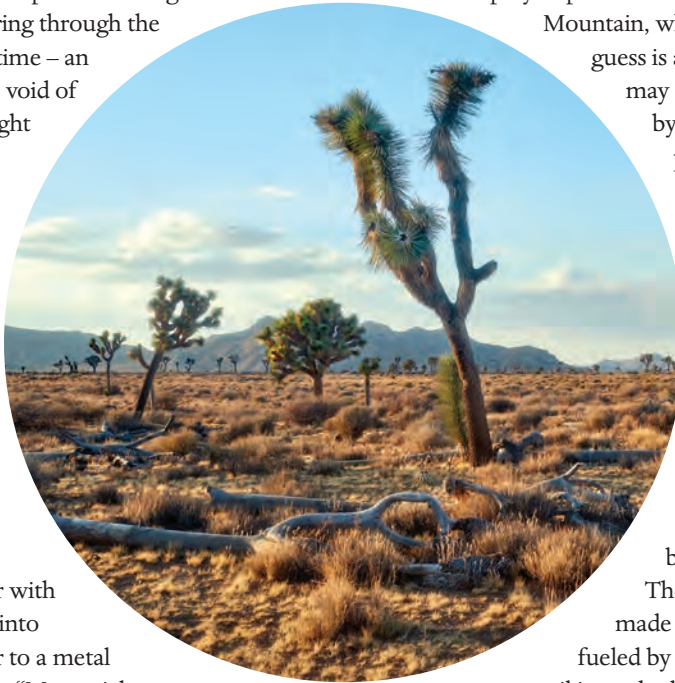
I catch a whiff of soot, still resonant after all these years, and I'm riveted back to the '80s when I worked as a seasonal wildland firefighter for the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District – one of the few women, and sometimes the only woman, on engine and helicopter crews. I also worked several seasons for the U.S. Forest Service's Mojave Greens wildland fire crew.

I remember a long, hot hike into a remote canyon near Quail Mountain during a fire in this very park, which I now behold at the edge of the Memorial Fire burn. Dressed in full fire gear on that blistering August day, I headed out to cut fireline, wondering – as always – as I surveyed the raging header of smoke and flames on the hillsides above if I would make it out alive.

I imagine how the Memorial Fire may have played out: As a lightning strike, it probably started when a pinyon pine tree caught fire on Quail Mountain, which rises to what I guess is around 5,000 feet. It may then have been fueled by heavy winds from the passing spring storm, ripping through the chaparral at lower elevations – plants that include manzanita and juniper. All of the pinyon pine and chaparral plants are highly flammable, and would have burned clean and hot. The fire may then have made its way downhill, fueled by windy spring weather, until it reached the Joshua trees in this

high desert woodland and torched through many acres of invasive grasses that were undoubtedly thick, calf-high and tinder-brown – dried to easy flammability by the hot daily temperatures of a long spring season.

For months after Memorial Day, there may have been vivid reminders that a fire had shredded the area: bits of burned fire hoses, perhaps the odd backpack or even a firefighter's shovel left behind. Yellow police tape might have clung to healthy Joshua trees on the edge of the burn zone to keep the public out. But then winter rains would have come, and the reminders would have slowly disappeared – faded into the comfort zone of smudged memories.





Now, a lone cholla cactus rises bravely near a pile of sooty, loose-strewn Joshua tree limbs. The silhouette mimics the huge, healthily-blossoming trees in the distance. Beneath it is a tiny yellow wildflower.

Standing here in the burn, I feel like a sort of keeper, a caretaker, if just in passing. To acknowledge the force of wildfire as it ripped through here – to honor what it claimed – to cherish what remains and find transformation in the subtle but tenacious regrowth.

A clear line of demarcation stands between the old burn zone and the healthy, thriving, blossoming Joshua trees far off in the distance. Up close, I see that many of the downed limbs are still intact; after a wildfire, burned Joshua trees can survive but may die within the first few years after fires, due to drought and other stresses on their re-sprouts. Some still bear charred stains on their fibrous skin that rubs off easily onto my fingers, even after all this time. It's as if the Memorial Fire burned just last season, that it hasn't been 17 years since these trees were torched with flames.

Standing here, leaning into the fierce wind, I'm reminded of how alone I feel these days, now that my only child and daughter, Tarah, has left home to marry and start her own family. She's split away from me, leaving the geography our lives together and charting out her own new terrain. It's an inevitable shift, and yet it feels as though I'm wandering a landscape of loss and new beginnings. Like giving birth – labor, a “ring of fire” – it hurts and leaves scars just as the forces of nature have painfully altered this desert scene.

I think of Tarah, in utero, hiking along with me inside of me as I struggled through the sandy Boy Scout Trail to Willow Hole on New Year's Day in 1988. I think of the many mother-daughter journeys we made in the park in subsequent years. Tarah climbed her first rock here. She went on her first overnight camping trip here. We hiked Ryan Mountain peak to Lost Palms Oasis and Barker Dam. Like me, she marveled at the fierceness of the desert landscape, at its capacity for offering unexpected moments of serenity.

But now our stories here are just memories, shimmering through place and time in the haze of the

Wonderland of Rocks just south of where I stand. My sense of missing her is immeasurable, like this view before me, and yet what we shared here through many years both soothes and sustains me now.

Maybe I can revisit the memories more clearly here today because of what's been cleaned away by the force of wildfire. The ghosts of the Joshua tree forest that once thrived here are reminders of what's passed by, what's been sacrificed, an talismans, too, of new life that is beginning to unfold. The new sprouts of needled growth at the bottom of burned Joshua trees remind me of my two little grandsons. I know that one day, I'll bring them here to explore.

As I think back to the parts of my life that have been burned clean, I realize I am becoming a witness to and participant in some kind of necessary cleanse by forces beyond my control, living a small part of a larger scheme of nature. There's a new beauty here, and the views are wider, and the tiny yellow and white wildflowers and the occasional orange poppies blooming in the open landscape don't hold back their displays of spring color.

A kit fox scurries past me, and disappears into a hole. Overhead, a lone raven swirls on an updraft of wind, making its timeless and haunting “caw, caw,” as if to wonder aloud what I'm doing out here. I look up. The breeze is fiercer now, harbinger of a spring storm on the way, and turning cold. It's time to say goodbye to this altered woodland forest. As the afternoon diminishes into dusty haze, I turn back to find that my car is much farther than I thought it was. I suddenly realize that I've lost track of time.

Before I drive away, something catches my eye across the road. At first, I think it's a balloon, snagged on a creosote bush, but this is no piece of wind-strewn litter. As I walk closer, I see that it's a huge hedgehog cactus – the size and shape of a beanbag chair – covered with giant blossoms that flame up against the subdued earth tones of the Joshua tree and granite boulders rising behind it.

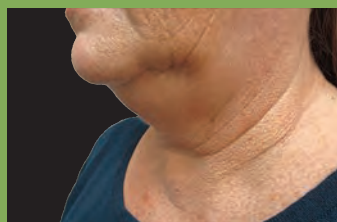
Like a lone woman, tending this cluster of boulders formed in the shape of shawl-draped desert keepers. The flowers are a brilliant red. The color of fire. 🌵

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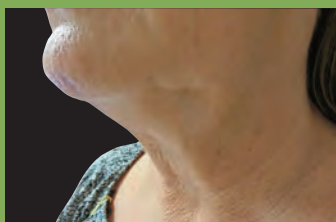
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Rag & Bone shirt, at Nordstrom. Moncler vest, at nordstrom.com. Hudson jeans, at hudsonjeans.com. Rings, model's own.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Alice & Olivia dress, at alicelandolivia.com. MSGM jacket, at nordstrom.com. Rings, model's own.








A full-page photograph of a man standing in a desert landscape. He is wearing a dark, quilted jacket over a light-colored t-shirt and dark, distressed jeans. He is looking back over his shoulder at the camera. The background shows dry, hilly terrain with sparse vegetation under warm, golden light.

Topman shirt and
Belstaff jacket, at
nordstrom.com.
Hudson jeans, at
hudsonjeans.com.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Topshop jacket and
dress, at topshop.com.
Rings, model's own.



On Alexander: Topman T-Shirt, at
topman.com. Moncler jacket and
Zanerobe pants, at nordstrom.com.
Rings, model's own.

On Ariana: A.L.C. dress at
nordstrom.com. Rings, model's own.



Helmut Lang hoodie,
at nordstrom.com.
Alexander Wang T-shirt,
at alexanderwang.com.
Zanerobe pants, at
zanerobe.com. Ring and
boots, model's own.





Vince dress, at vince.com. Rebecca
Taylor jacket, at rebeccataylor.com.
BP. sunglasses, at nordstrom.com.





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The City of Palm Springs and The Desert Sun Newspaper Group Encourages Residents to Support Families of Fallen PSPD Officers

In the wake of the officer-involved shooting that fatally killed Palm Springs police officers **Jose "Gil" Vega** and **Lesley Zerebny**, the City of Palm Springs and the Desert Sun Newspaper Group would like to keep our community up to date on how you can support the families of the fallen officers in their time of need.

Donate online by visiting <https://give.cornerstone.cc/palmspring-spoa> or by going to the city's website at www.palmspringsca.gov where you will find a link on the front page to make a donation.

Citizens can mail donations to the following address: **Palm Springs Police Officers Association, 180 N. Luring Drive, Palm Springs, Calif. 92262.** Anyone interested in conducting an independent fundraiser for the fallen officers should contact the Police Officers Association at info@palmspringsspoa.com.



Officer Jose Gil Vega
63 years old
Married, 8 children
35 Year Veteran of PSPD



Officer Lesley Zerebny
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A photograph of an outdoor tennis court at Toscana Country Club. In the foreground, a tennis net is visible. Two people, a woman in a pink shirt and a man in a grey shirt, are standing on the court. The background features several tall palm trees and a clear blue sky. The text "TOSCANA. ITALIAN FOR CENTER COURT." is overlaid on the image.

TOSCANA. ITALIAN FOR CENTER COURT.

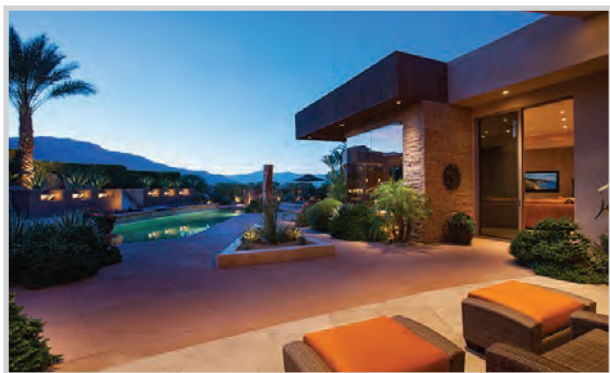


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INDIAN WELLS | \$2,275,000
**73833 DESERT GARDEN TRAIL
THE RESERVE CLUB**

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INDIAN WELLS | \$1,195,000
**50177 HIDDEN VALLEY
THE RESERVE CLUB**

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43611 Port Maria | \$949,000

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43721 Chapelton | \$722,000

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79025 Montego Bay Dr | \$622,000

Corner lot 3BR/3.5BA. Custom home on a 16,117sf lot with unobstructed south facing mountain, fairway & green views. Great room w/fireplace. Remodeled gourmet kitchen. 3,181sf.



79305 Bermuda Dunes Dr | \$559,000

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42528 Bellagio Dr | \$529,000

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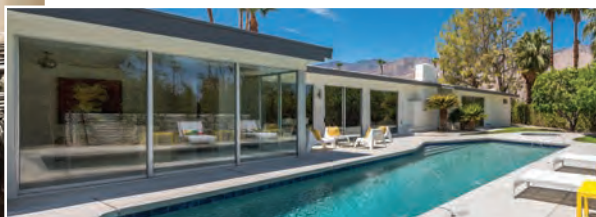
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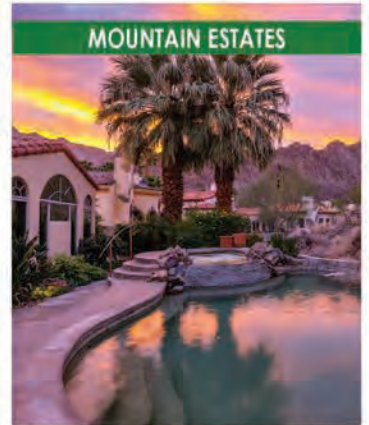
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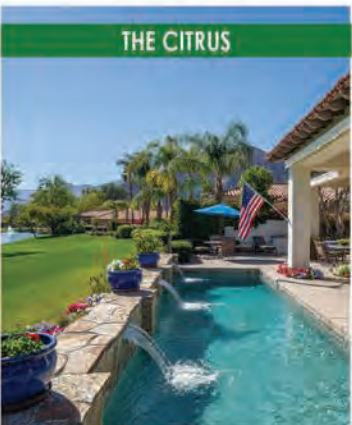
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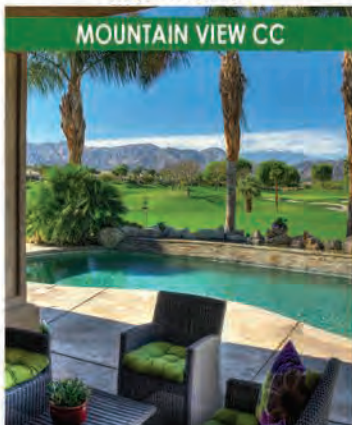
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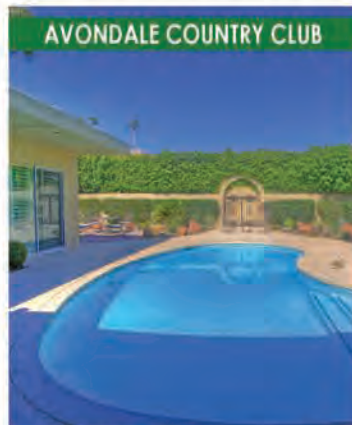
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Final Thoughts

ONE ARTIST'S TAKE ON THE WAYS IN WHICH WE SEEK - AND FIND - BEAUTY IN THE DESERT.

Words by MICHELLE CASTILLO

I looked out our second-floor window and everyone was out riding their bikes, wearing shorts and sundresses – families picnicking around Lake Merritt. I stood there numb to everything.

Now, what? What about that loft we were going to get? Or the two children we imagined running in our backyard?

Snapping out of my daze, I heard his voice shouting from downstairs, “Grab my bike off the mantle, will you?” The studio now looked like it did the day we arrived. Empty. Sunlight hit the wooden floors, and I closed the door before slipping the keys under. The smell of the panadería across the street whiffed into my nose as I took one more glance at the old man who waited to die on our street every day, smoking his last cigarette while notes of jazz filled the city. All of this ultimately became a part of me.

But this isn't our story; it's mine, and you're just a part of it.

I hauled everything I owned into my car, with my ex-lover's bicycle attached to the roof. The fog eventually disappeared, the roads shifted from pavement to gravel and the heat seeped into my skin. Mountains on every corner replaced buildings, and we were back on 1-10 headed for the desert. The only noise you could hear was the clamoring of the wine glasses we bought together, the rattling of his bike and a loud, vast, open sound only the desert landscape can produce. Two summers ago, after a stint of city living and what seemed to be an enormous amount of young love, I found myself back at my childhood address. Seeing the windmills silhouetted against the mountainside, the comfort of home rushed into my body. The desert held a familiar scent – my grandmother's Filipino cooking, soy sauce mixed in with vinegar, ginger and garlic simmering ever so slowly in a huge metal pot, along with the subtle smell of coconut bundled in banana leaves – and the feeling that everything was going to be alright. Or at least that was the sensation I craved.

There I was, unpacking everything in my parents' garage. I'd left behind one of the best teaching jobs in Oakland and a life I thought I knew. On the evening of my return to the desert, the gradient of colors from the sunset melded into a fiery warmth that embraced my existence. Within that moment, I realized I needed to let all of it happen.

Exhausted from the drive, I went to the backyard and dug my feet into the earth. The damp grass felt good against my hot skin, and I wasn't sure how to move forward or if I even could. As I looked up at the summer moon, my body knew this was the end of a relationship but the beginning of something new. Sometimes people, places and things happen because they help you arrive at your next destination. I never planned to move back here, but the desert chose me. 🌱

Michelle Castillo is a writer, educator, community arts organizer and social activist based out of Palm Springs. She is currently an MFA candidate for poetry at the University of California, Riverside-Palm Desert and is at work on her first poetry collection. She has lived in several cities but will always call the desert home. You can find her online at motherearthdiaries.wordpress.com.



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