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DESERT

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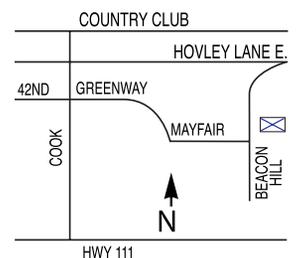
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2018 was natural curls, tattoos and a sun-kissed tan. It was a written letter. “It’s safe to say this place saved me,” I wrote to a stranger. “The intricate blooms of the Joshua trees, the way the sun melts into the horizon and dares me to race it down Old Woman Springs Road, and the shop owners who know my first name when I walk in the door — it’s all been healing.” It’s a man who, mourning the loss of a child, chose to sell his home to a woman who’d bring “light” into it. Sir, I hope I’m doing you proud.

2018 was loving the life I am building on my own. Loving my body. Not loving the bills. Being intentional with friends who matter most, and investing in those relationships no matter the cost. It was grey area, and being OK with that.

2018 was tumbleweeds, jackrabbits and empty Pacifico bottles. It was, as Allen Stone sings, keeping “my dirt on the surface so you don’t gotta dig. The people that make me nervous try to hide all their sins.”

2018 was Ruffles and ranch dip, power tools and long hikes. It was finding my way back to the blank page. “Write about what scares you,” a professor once told me. “Then never stop writing.”

2018 was chilled red wine, and a paw on my shoulder across the bed in the dark. Eight more weeks than I thought I’d have with my dog. Her growl whenever a bird flies by the house. Her sneezes when she’s lying upside down.

2018 was apple pie for breakfast, dial-up Internet, and a mailbox that can’t seem to stay closed. It’s a dirt road that stirs the half-and-half into my coffee on my way to work.

2018 was throwing the windows open, letting the light in — and the dust. Beauty and ashes. All at once.

Kristin Scharkey, Editor
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CALENDAR

OFF TO THE MOVIES

January
3rd
-14th

PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Nearly 150,000 filmgoers descend on Palm Springs to take in the best of the big screen during this celebration of cinema. At the acclaimed Film Awards Gala, "Bohemian Rhapsody" star Rami Malek receives the Breakthrough Performance Award. Six-pack ticket packages are \$69. psfilmfest.org



GET TO
KNOW RAMI
MALEK

The "Bohemian Rhapsody" star (left) talks about his transformation on page 52!

EQUESTRIAN EXCITEMENT

6th EMPIRE POLO OPENING DAY & HAT DAY

Grab your hats and flats for two matches at noon and 2 p.m. to kick off the 2019 polo season. General admission is free with a \$20 parking fee for all Sunday afternoon polo games – and tailgaters are welcome! empirepoloevents.com

LOCAL ATTRACTION

THROUGH JANUARY 8th ROBOLIGHTS

For more than 30 years, Kenny Irwin has constructed robotic light sculptures and displayed them for the public on his family's property at Granvia Valmonte. This year, the event is open from 4 to 9:30 p.m. Parking permits are required in the immediate area around the light exhibit. facebook.com/robolights

CONTEMPORARY CRAFTSMAN

JANUARY 12th -13th DESERT ARTS FESTIVAL

Two- and three-dimensional fine art is on display at Frances Stevens Park. Expect wood vessels, gourd art, fabricated jewelry and more. Stop by from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. visitpalmsprings.com

ABSTRACT AESTHETIC

JANUARY 24th -27th SOUTHWEST ARTS FESTIVAL

The Empire Polo Club plays host to this four-day celebration of arts and crafts made by more than 200 artists from around the globe. Glass blowing, pottery and painting will be on display, in addition to myriad food and beverage options. Tickets start at \$15, \$13 for seniors, and children under 5 get in free. discoverindio.com/southwest-arts-festival



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"All is True"; below:
"Ladies in Black"
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LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES

THE **PALM SPRINGS FILM FEST** IS GREATLY EXPANDING WITH A LINEUP SHOWING THE BEST OF THE LAST 30 YEARS.

The Palm Springs International Film Festival will celebrate its 30th anniversary Jan. 3–14 by presenting a whopping 223 films from 78 countries, including 30 of the most popular films in the festival's history. Here are a few top picks.

"BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY"

Jan. 3 | 12:15 p.m. | Annenberg Theater

Part of the popular Talking Pictures program, this screening features star Rami Malek (who portrays Freddie Mercury in the Queen biopic) discussing the film directed by Bryan Singer.

"CINEMA PARADISO"

Jan. 4 | 12 p.m. | Palm Canyon Theater

This 1988 film catapulted the festival to international attention by winning the Best Foreign Language Oscar in its debut year.



"ALL IS TRUE"

Jan. 4 | 6:30 p.m. | Palm Springs High School

Directed by and starring England's five-time Oscar-nominated Kenneth Branagh, this year's opening night film is a look at the final days of William Shakespeare.

"LADIES IN BLACK"

Jan. 13 | 6:30 p.m. | Palm Springs High School

Directed by two-time Oscar-nominated Australian Bruce Beresford, the closing night film examines the glory days of elegant department stores.
—Bruce Fessier

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TOP TO BOTTOM: Sip a Shy Rickey cocktail at Del Rey in Palm Springs; The charred octopus is served with salsa verde and potatoes; The bar features a cozy atmosphere with lights dimmed low. COURTESY VILLA ROYALE

NOW OPEN

Palm Springs' coolest new bar is hiding in a historic hotel.

With lights dimmed low and a flickering blaze in the black-and-white tiled fireplace, it's safe to say Del Rey is one of the coziest spots in Palm Springs.

Tucked in the back of recently opened hotel Villa Royale, this teeny-tiny bar is illuminated just enough to see the masculine wood ceilings paired with plush Art Deco chairs finished in gold.

But it's not just the intimate appeal that has locals buzzing about this swanky, new hot spot at the property previously known as the Villa Royale Inn. It's also the Spanish and Mediterranean-focused small plates, crafted by chef Louis Martinez, that bring a bit more spice to the culinary landscape of Palm Springs.

So, grab a seat at the bar or slide into a tufted vinyl booth, and raise a glass of beer, wine or a craft cocktail in the adults-only lounge that's open late.

The \$16 Baby Sledge blends smoky Bozal mezcal with Aperol, Strega liqueur and lime for a well-balanced (and bright pink) start to an evening. If you're in the mood for something a bit more tropical, try the \$15 Permanent Friends with Broker's gin, grapefruit, pineapple, jalapeño vanilla, maple syrup and lime.

A must-order appetizer is the \$5 grilled flatbread. It's soft but crispy with the perfect amount of char. But back to the spice...

When asked what he wants guests to take away from his food, Martinez has a simple answer: "We know how to season it." And it's true, the chef – who opened Bar Casa Vale in Portland – doesn't hold back from "in your face" flavor.

Martinez's \$16 charred octopus is served with salsa verde and potatoes. It's rich and tender, and a great appetizer for two. His \$32 branzino, though simply prepared (seared with salt), comes atop a delicious poblano cream, made with roasted caramelized onions, that packs a punch. It's an entree also perfect for sharing.

Finish the evening with yogurt panna cotta, comprising grapefruit gelee and citrus, which is at once sweet and tart. Paired with Domaine Rolet Père et Fils sparkling rosé, the milkiness rounds out the spice of the evening.

Pro tip: The best seat in the house is by the fireplace. 🍷



IF YOU GO

What: Del Rey at Villa Royale

Where: 1620 S. Indian Trail, Palm Springs

When: Open daily 4 p.m. to midnight



PRO TIP
The best seat in the house is by the fireplace.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Chef Louis Martinez's branzino is served with poblano cream; Grilled steak comes with crispy potatoes, charred vegetables and chimichurri; Cozy up by the outdoor fireplace; Enjoy eggplant fattouch with grapes, pomegranate, flatbread and yogurt; The best seat in Del Rey is by the fireplace; Pull up a seat to the outdoor bar. COURTESY VILLA ROYALE



HABITAT

LEGIT

COLIN QUEST AKA **HABITAT LEGIT** IS A SELF-TAUGHT DIGITAL ARTIST BASED IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA. IN HIS COLLAGES, HE FUSES **PALM SPRINGS ARCHITECTURE** WITH A COLOR PALETTE HE FOUND IN MEXICO – TO CREATE VIBRANT, INTRICATE PIECES OF ART FOR MODERN AGE.



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Clockwise from top: “Mirage,” “Mellow” and “Oasis” by Colin Quest AKA Habitat Legit. Growing up, the Melbourne, Australia-based artist had always been drawn to collage when he discovered Photoshop. Now, he finds inspiration in Palm Springs architecture to remix “those desert settings” with his own touch of “tropical, quirky surrealism but with a raw, abandoned setting.”

HOW DID YOU TEACH YOURSELF DIGITAL COLLAGE?

I’ve always considered myself a creative person and someone that needs to constantly be occupied with side passions such as art, music and photography. In my early teens, I used to try to replicate company logos in Flash, then turn them into stickers or iron-on transfers for t-shirts. Throughout school I then started to become quite intrigued by collage and I found myself leaning towards the medium whenever a creative project was assigned, beginning with analog collage and then eventually digital years later when I was introduced to Photoshop.

WHY FOCUS ON PALM SPRINGS ARCHITECTURE?

Honestly, it’s only recently that I began to find a greater appreciation for architecture and I felt a big change in the way I looked at buildings, homes and other structures. Texture, pattern and color have always been elements that play a necessary role in my work so it was only natural that I started to find inspiration from Palm Springs, not only for the architecture but from the surrounding desert landscapes and the way they complement each other so well. From there I started to experiment ways to remix those desert settings with my own touch of tropical, quirky surrealism but with a raw, abandoned setting.



WHAT INSPIRES YOUR COLOR PALETTE AND PATTERNS?

From an early age I've always gravitated toward color. It's a part of my personality. Maybe it's from growing up in regional Australia and not being overly exposed to vibrant tones and fantasizing about bright tropical destinations. Either way I've always been that guy trying to source the most outrageous patterned shirts. Spending some time in Mexico is what really made an impact though, as it's inspiring how engrained color is a part of their culture that (it) has become an attraction in itself. Color creates identity and most importantly, it gets people talking.

WHERE DO YOU FIND THE PHOTOGRAPHS FOR YOUR DIGITAL COLLAGES?

When I first started out, I was just ripping photos off Google and trying to piece together a bunch of random ideas until something worked. It was far from serious and I had no intention of pursuing digital art or design, as I was dedicating most of my spare time toward producing music. Not satisfied using other people's photos, eventually I began to use my own travel snaps which immediately shifted my priority to creating more and more as I was receiving positive reactions both online and (in real life).

Using this imagery now gave my work an aesthetic that was unique to myself and added a personal layer with deeper meaning, taking me back to the time and place where the photos in each piece were captured. These days, I now seek out photos with the intention of using them for my art, like

of textured colorful walls, landscapes, patterned breeze blocks and succulents, for example. However, inspiration can come from anywhere so it pays to always carry a camera when hitting the streets.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR YOU TO PUT TOGETHER EACH PIECE?

(It) depends on the idea, time finding the right images and the process of figuring out how to convey what I'm visualizing onto the computer, but usually it's spread over a couple of nights between working my 9 to 5. I find I'm more productive working continually on the first session until the work is pretty much complete or I'm simply burnt out – just enough to get the initial idea and composition right. The next few sessions are used to refine, add more details and make adjustments or at least try get to a point where I'm happy, which is usually impossible when you're the toughest critic.

WHAT PROGRAMS DO YOU USE TO CREATE THESE DIGITAL COLLAGES?

Adobe Photoshop. Although recently I'm feeling a pull toward 3-D software and I'm curious to test out my style in another format. Always moving, always learning.

WHAT DO YOU WANT VIEWERS TO TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR WORK?

Simply the idea of not taking life too seriously. Embrace your imperfections and DO YOU. 🌱

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NIGHT WHITES

Now is the time to start planting cactuses to experience their pale morning blooms in summer.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAUREEN GILMER

They unfurl in the darkness, great white trumpets as long as my forearm, opening into a blossom the diameter of a regulation softball. It is a one-day event that spans the dawn when pollinators feed in the coolest hours of blistering summer days. These are the white roses of summer, rising from large cactus of the *Cereus* group that stand and climb depending on the species. What they all share is nearly identical flowers that are the biggest and boldest of all.

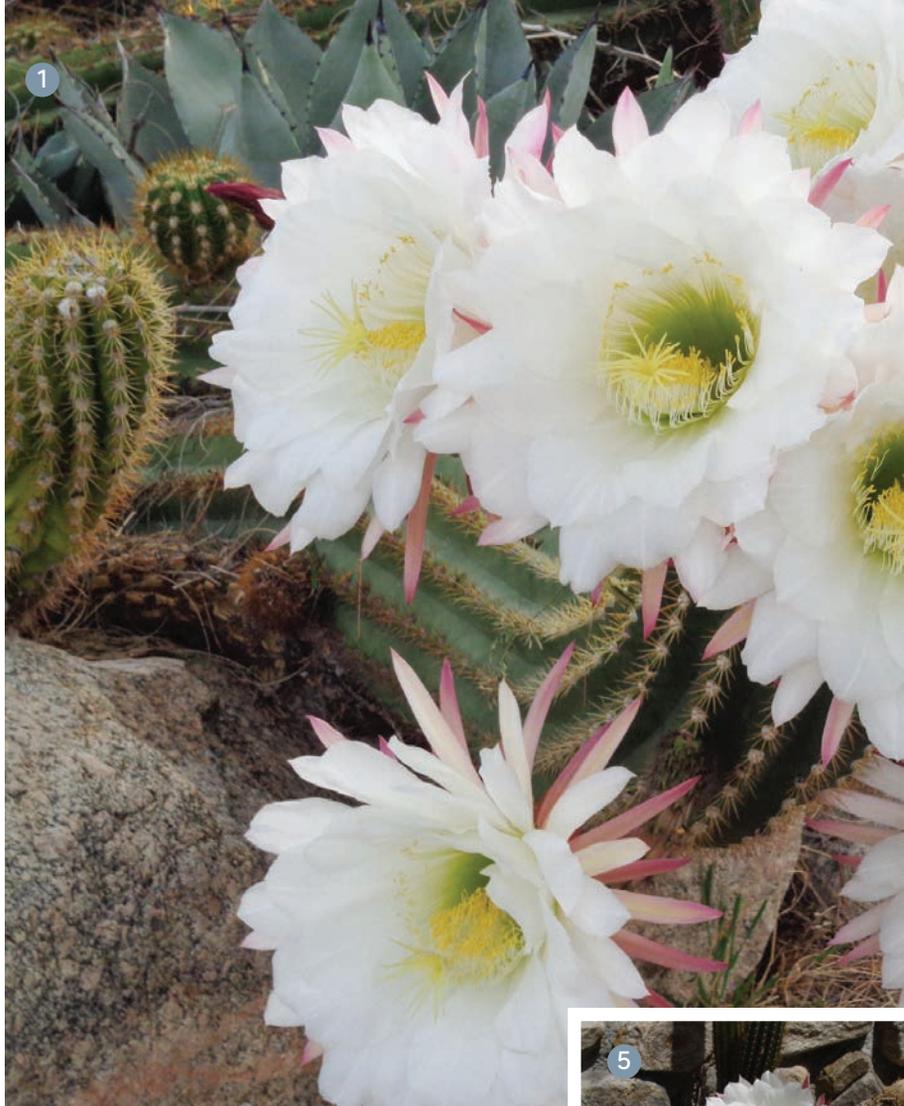
Every still summer morning huge white trumpet flowers fill the air with a sophisticated perfume. It will make you think gardenia or jasmine. The foot-long blossoms rise like bouquets of pale roses opening in the dark of night to call moths and bats with their scent. They remain open until first light when the bees descend in droves. Hummingbirds find them irresistible.

January is the ideal time to plant these cactuses from large or small specimens. They'll get cool conditions and lots of moisture to bloom six months down the road in summer. Plant too late and they may reduce or forego blooming due to transplantation and heat.

Over the years it becomes clear that a number of different *Cereus*-group cactus produce nearly identical white flowers. Not all of them do well in our low desert, though. Buy only proven bloomers here, which are desert species from Mexico and South America that are well adapted. Let's consider them by form.

1. All these flowers are produced on a single stem of *Echinopsis candicans*. 2. Apple cactuses blossom in the early morning light.

3. Cold hardy *Tricocereus spachianus* is in full bloom on nearly every stem of the plant. 4. Dangling from a palm tree, this Palm Springs vine cactus demonstrates its bloom profile. 5. Horizontal grower, *E. candicans*, will reflect changes in grade with its habit.





The columnar forms are all big plants at maturity that make fine landscape specimens. They have a central base from which many tall upright stems grow for an overall vase shape.

Apple Cactus (*Cereus repandus*): This is the fruit tree cactus of Peru grown in Israeli orchards for large white flesh fruit that follows pollinated flowers. Nearly spine free. Protect from direct afternoon sun.

San Pedro (*Echinopsis pachanoi*): A spineless green skin tree cactus, among the *Echinopsis* crowd that produces some of the largest blooms of all.

Torch Cactus (*Tricocereus spachianus*): A medium-sized columnar cactus well-spined against rabbits for open homesites, plus it's cold hardy in the high desert as well.

Queen of the Night (*Hylocereus triangularis*): This is the best species for the low desert, and is a true vine cactus, which adapts to grow into shady tree canopies in the wild. The grocery store "dragon fruit" fall into this category, but it prefers more humidity. The narrow, three-sided desert hardy vine cactus has two growth forms. It begins with a stiff and upright stem that is slow because it has a more fibrous interior for structure to help it start to climb. This allows the vine to eventually reach a tree limb.

Once the vine reaches a branch and feels support, it changes to a different type of growth. It'll branch out with vigorous softer stems which produce the flowers and fruit more abundantly. This vine can live in a palo verde tree or others with light canopies, or espalier to side yard fences and walls. Note that *H. triangularis* produces delicious fruit, but it is not frost hardy in the high desert and may even suffer on the valley floor if not protected from rare hard frost.

Argentine Giant (*Echinopsis candicans*): Finally my white "roses" are flowers of *Echinopsis candicans*. Its horizontal stems average 6 inches in diameter and grow indefinitely. Where they contact earth, lots of new roots form, then big new stems bud out along its length. Each is capable of bearing big bundles of flowers.

All these cactuses bloom heavy in early summer, then some flower again after every fall rain until it's cold. They bloomed spectacularly after last month's October thunder shower! So did all the torch cactus around here, which are many as they are so easy to propagate. You may get two seasons of bloom as well, early summer and fall if conditions are right.

Whether you just love the purity of white flowers or long to enjoy the night bloomers in your own yard, these candidates will be no-brainers. The bigger the original plant, the more it will bloom. Most of these are easy to start from a cut stem dropped in a post hole. Buy a big specimen today from any of the local dealers and you'll discover summer morning magic. Take all the cuttings you want in the future for snowy beauty all around the yard when everything else is going to sleep for the dog days. 🌵

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A VERY ODD BIRD

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ROADRUNNERS DISAPPEAR
TO EACH WINTER.

No bird is so odd and well known as the roadrunner. Unlike most birds with which we are familiar, a roadrunner runs rather than flies, readily embraces humans and, as a predator, feeds on some of the most unappetizing animals imaginable including scorpions, black widows and rattlesnakes.

There are two kinds of roadrunner: a small one called the Lesser Roadrunner, *Geococcyx velox*, and a big one known as the Greater Roadrunner, *Geococcyx californianus*. The Greater Roadrunner is the one with which we are familiar, in part, because of the Warner Bros. “Roadrunner” cartoon series memorable for the ever-pursuing adversary, Wile E. Coyote. The Lesser Roadrunner is a Mexican species whose nearest population lies in the state of Sonora, 300 miles from the U.S. border. Other than its weight of 8 ounces (two-thirds that of its larger cousin), nothing is known about it.

PREFERS TO RUN RATHER THAN FLY

There is no doubt our roadrunner prefers to run rather than fly. Over the years my daughters, co-workers and myself have raised dozens of roadrunners from eggs and hatchlings



– brought to us as orphans by valley residents. Hatchling roadrunners grow rapidly on a diet of mealworms, crickets and commercially available frozen mice. Within four weeks they reach adult size.

With access to free and cooperative subjects, I was able to take photographs of roadrunners in novel situations. I particularly wanted an image of a roadrunner in flight, impossible to obtain in the wild and no easy feat even when working with tame birds. Enlisting the aid of my oldest daughter, Mandy, I had her toss birds into the air assuming they would flap their wings and glide for a short distance. With every toss, however, each roadrunner glided immediately to the ground and so fast I could never get a photograph.

Mandy suggested she throw the bird over the local, community pool. This worked since each roadrunner was obviously born with an aversion to landing on water. It was forced to flap its wings several times, then glide to the edge of the pool. Using the technique, I finally got the photograph I desired as the bird remained airborne for several seconds.

HOW FAST?

“How fast can a roadrunner run?” is a question I am often asked. The top speed given in the literature is 18 miles per hour. I put the top speed closer to 20 based on a roadrunner running alongside my vehicle for a short distance. In either case, a roadrunner’s speed is less than half that of a race

horse. Winning Brew reached nearly 44 mph at the 2008 Penn National Race Course in Grantville, Penn. A roadrunner's top speed is also less than a human sprinter. Usain Bolt, the Olympic gold medalist from Jamaica, was once clocked at 27 miles per hour. Despite comparisons, the much smaller size of the roadrunner enables it to reach top speed faster than a horse or human, and my money would be on the roadrunner in a 10-yard sprint. It is also more maneuverable and, using its wings and tail as breaks and rudders, can change direction in an instant; a critical ability when chasing lizards and other small, fleet-footed animals.

AS A PREDATOR

The diet of a roadrunner is limited by three factors. Prey must be alive and moving, not too large to be subdued and not poisonous. Thus, dead animals are off limits as are large animals that weigh more than a pound.

A roadrunner's diverse appetite should make it a welcome addition to any neighborhood. Crickets and cockroaches are routinely consumed. The shells of garden snails offer no protection as a roadrunner smashes them against a hard surface, flings away shell fragments and swallows the torso in one gulp. My wife is particularly fond of our local roadrunner's willingness to pluck black widows off their webs, crush them in its beak and swallow entire spiders.

I must confess there are some creatures most homeowners prefer a roadrunner not eat. Nestling songbirds are consumed as are their parents, if they can be caught. There is at least one record of a roadrunner leaping into the air to capture a hummingbird. I never dreamed fast-flying (and mosquito-eating) dragonflies could be snapped up by roadrunners but now have seen this happen four times in my own yard. Lizards were once common around our home, but not anymore. For the first time last spring, a roadrunner built a nest and raised a brood of four chicks in a shrub at the side of our home. By the time the young left the nest, every spiny, whiptail and side-blotched lizard within 100 feet of our yard was gone.

THE SNAKE EATER

A roadrunner's propensity to eat snakes, most importantly venomous



Opposite page: The Greater Roadrunner; this page: A roadrunner attacks a sidewinder rattlesnake. JAMES W. CORNETT

species, dramatically enhances their image among laypersons and at least partially makes up for the culinary digressions described above. For the record, a roadrunner approaches any snake as though it were venomous, and no roadrunner is immune to the bite of a venomous snake. If bitten, and venom injected, a roadrunner dies. Nonetheless, there is no roadrunner alive that will not attack and kill a small rattlesnake. Victims are generally less than 18 inches in length though much larger rattlers will be harassed by yanking on their tail.

A HIBERNATOR?

I first became seriously interested in roadrunners when, time after time I was asked, "Where do roadrunners go in winter?" Of course, they don't go anywhere since, as poor fliers, they can't migrate. (I have never heard nor seen roadrunners running south for the winter.) My own field notes, however, do indicate roadrunners are observed much less in winter.

In addition, desert residents often relate how a roadrunner visited them daily through spring, summer and early fall. Then, rather suddenly in late fall, the bird's daily appearances become less consistent or, more typically, stop altogether. What happens to roadrunners in winter?

One possible explanation is roadrunners hibernate. Roadrunners, unlike most other birds, enter torpor every night and allow their body temperature to drop significantly. It is conceivable that some birds extend this torpor in winter to days, weeks or even months to save energy when food is less available. There is, after all, one bird species known to hibernate: the common poor-will, *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*, that I wrote about a few months ago. Might the roadrunner be a second species? No roadrunner has been found in torpor for even a single day much less the entire winter. Finding such a bird during the daytime would be a strong indication that at least some roadrunners hibernate.

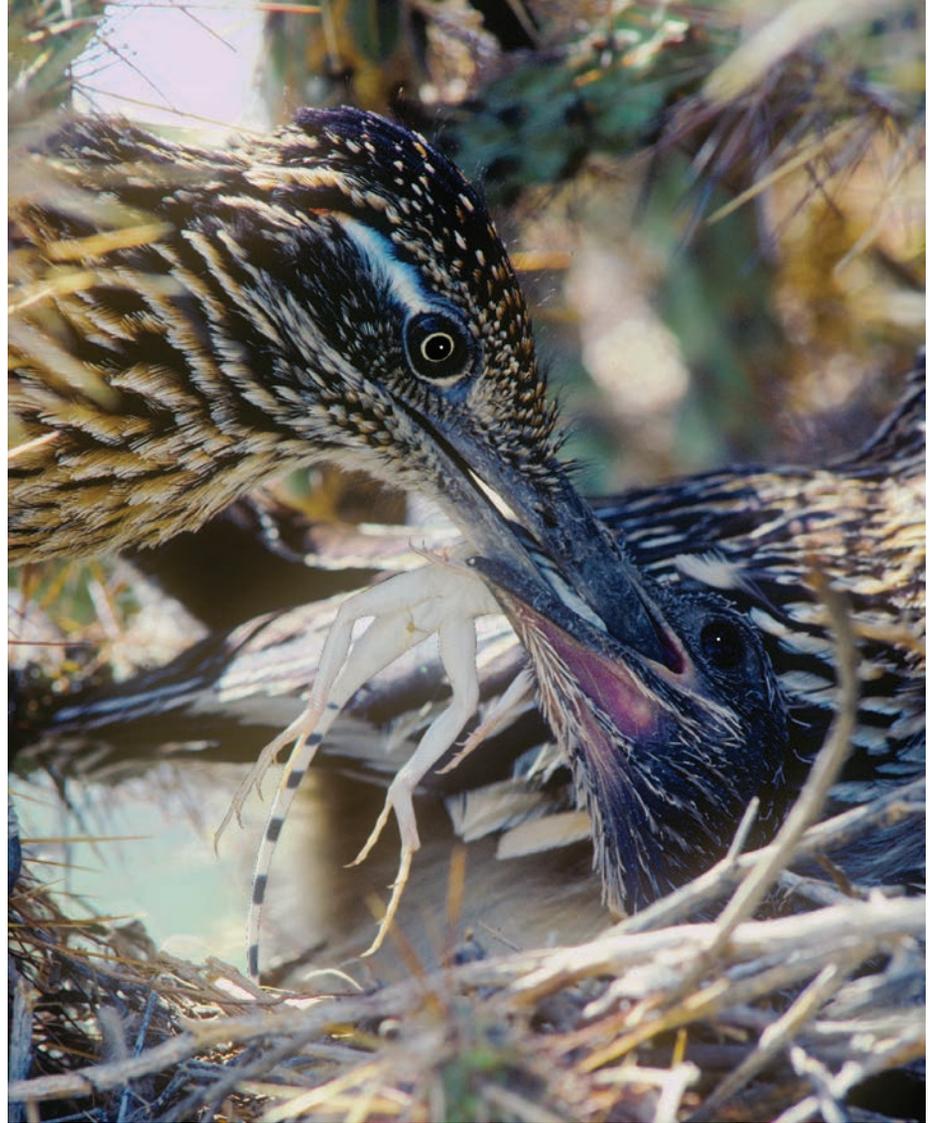
ROADRUNNERS AND HUMANS

Encounters between humans and roadrunners are both frequent and diverse. For example, it is not unusual for roadrunners to follow hikers, particularly in state and national parks where people are likely to be on their best behavior. Lest a human mistakenly believe a tag-along roadrunner wants to make friends, be aware the bird is most likely hungry and on the lookout for an easy meal. To a roadrunner, even the smallest among us is a lumbering mammal capable of stirring up insects and reptiles as we walk down a trail. Roadrunners follow us just as they might a steer or horse.

My most memorable encounter with roadrunners involved a British broadcasting crew who wanted to film their behaviors. Before making the trip from London, however, they needed assurances the birds would appear and they could film them up close. I told them it was very likely the birds would show up since we were conducting feeding experiments and the birds appeared every morning for free handouts. I was not sure they were convinced but, nevertheless, arrived a few weeks later. I had them transfer their gear to my SUV, so the birds would not be frightened by a strange vehicle. We could neither see the birds nor hear the clattering of their bills as we drove slowly down the road towards the study site. Then, suddenly, the male and female ran out of the desert, launched themselves through the open windows and into the vehicle – while we were still moving! The birds perched briefly on the shoulders and heads of film crew members as they investigated every corner of the interior looking for crickets and mealworms. “Is that close enough for you?” I said smiling.

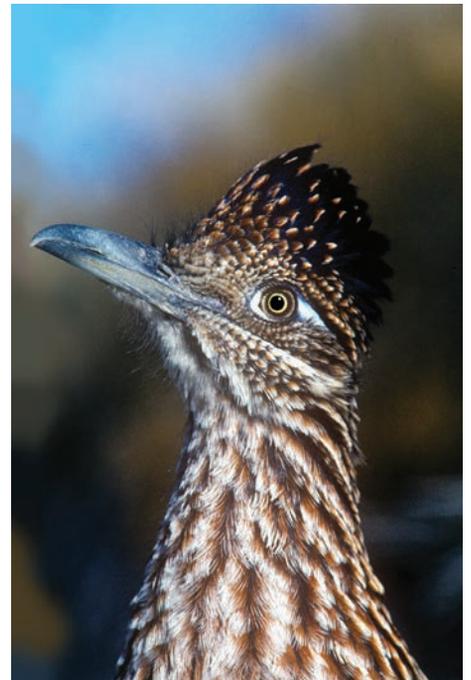
ROADRUNNERS IN THE HOUSE

Bob and Marilyn Shoemaker lived on a golf course surrounded by homes. They heard I was studying roadrunners and called to tell me a pair of roadrunners had built a nest 4 feet off the ground just outside their back door. The Shoemakers also had two small dogs that entered the backyard whenever they wished through a pet



door. The dogs were intimidated by the roadrunners as they watched the birds from a distance and never moved toward them. Sometimes the roadrunners would rush the dogs scaring them back into the house.

When I arrived, the Shoemakers suggested I sit in the living room and wait for the roadrunners to tap on the back slider. “They do that?” I asked. “Oh, yes, every morning,” Mrs. Shoemaker replied. In less than five minutes two roadrunners were at the slider and started tapping on the glass with their bills. Mr. Shoemaker opened the slider and the birds immediately came in, looked around, then jumped up on the drainboard in the kitchen. On a paper plate were two dozen mealworms about half of which were quickly gathered up by the parent birds. Bills filled, the roadrunners rushed outside, jumped up into the nest and stuffed the insects into the mouths of the chicks. When finished, they came



Top: Parent feeding lizard to chick; bottom: roadrunner face JAMES W. CORNETT

back into the kitchen snapped up the rest of the mealworms and repeated the process.

The parents came back into the kitchen a third time but seeing no mealworms left the house. They would not tap on the slider again until the next morning. (The tapping started after the Shoemakers began feeding the roadrunners mealworms on the patio.)

As the roadrunners became habituated to the practice, they started arriving before the Shoemakers went outside and even tried to get inside when they saw the Shoemakers in the house.

Initially, they probably pecked at the glass probing for a way to gain entry. Eventually, the roadrunner pair made the connection between glass tapping, the Shoemakers' response and getting the mealworms. The Shoemakers believed they had trained the roadrunners. But since only the roadrunners benefited directly from the relationship, it seemed to me it was the roadrunners that had conditioned the Shoemakers.

JERRY'S PET ROADRUNNERS

Jerry Tyree of Sun City, Palm Desert, had a pair of roadrunners that came through his yard, almost daily. He had always fed "Suzie" and "Jerome" mealworms and crickets, and occasionally mice from the pet store. One day I asked Jerry if I could bring my students to his home to see his roadrunners. He jumped at the opportunity to show off the birds. The day we arrived he set out folding chairs on his patio facing the golf course. After greetings and introductions, we all sat down. Jerry asked that each student hold out one hand, so he could place a half-dozen mealworms in their palms. He asked them to gently close their hands over the mealworms. Once prepped, Jerry called out "Suzie, Jerome" and within 30 seconds two adult roadrunners jumped atop the low wall that separated his patio from the fairway. "Open your hands," said Jerry. As soon as the students revealed the mealworms, the two roadrunners jumped on the closest lap and proceeded to gobble down each

mealworm before moving on to the next very amazed student.

FEEDING ROADRUNNERS

Over the years I have met hundreds of people that feed roadrunners. Nearly every human food provider, at least initially, gives raw hamburger to the birds. A few even give beef tenderloin, erroneously believing they are providing a "better" meal.

A meal of only hamburger or tenderloin is as bad for roadrunners as it is for humans, even worse if a parent bird feeds the meat to a rapidly developing chick. Most of the ingredients necessary for proper development are lacking in hamburger resulting in growth deformities in developing roadrunners, in some cases after only a single meal.

I advise that if one insists on feeding local roadrunners, give them crickets or mealworms which can be purchased from pet stores or online. Of course, if they fill up on artificial foods, they may not eat the black widows and snails you could probably do without. 🌱

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WAY OUT



Veteran band tour manager Rick Marino drives us to **TUCSON** for a dude ranch experience.

WORDS BY RICK MARINO

Rancho de la Osa COURTESY RANCHO DE LA OSA

WEST

A photograph of two people riding horses through a desert landscape. The person on the left is wearing a cowboy hat, a light-colored jacket, and a white scarf. The person on the right is wearing a tan cowboy hat and a blue jacket. They are riding through tall, dry grass. In the background, there are low mountains under a clear blue sky.

A few years back I hosted a travel show that aired on Delta flights worldwide called “State X State.” For one episode, the network wanted me to explore what I thought best showcased Arizona. This is no easy task since Arizona is a very cool state top to bottom and side to side. One thing I love about it, besides the beautiful landscapes, is the history of the Old West. This month’s road trip, I set out to revisit some of the places I found for my TV show and discover a few new ones. What better way to experience Arizona’s Old West past than to stay at some of the famous guest ranches throughout the state?

Now, you've got it right if you think of guest ranches as dude ranches. In the '50s, there were over 100 of them in the Tucson area. And, yes, riding horses is one of the staples of a ranch stay. But what if you aren't a horse person like me? That's the best part. You don't have to be! The locations and accommodations are beautiful and pretty luxe, and there are many activities for any explorer. Hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking and even ATV rides are offered, and when the chow bell rings, the food is downright delicious.

My first stop is about 5.5 hours from Palm Desert and about 90 minutes from Tucson International Airport, in a very remote and stunning part of the state. Rancho de la Osa is a magical adobe hacienda on a 540-acre ranch a mile from the Mexico border.

I learned about this ranch 20 years ago while on tour in the U.K. In the lobby of my hotel in London, there was a book called *Hip Hotels* and on the second page there was a picture of an indigo blue wall with a cow skull and a cactus. Naturally, it grabbed my attention.

The history alone is worth coming here and it reads something like this: It started off as a Tohono O'odham village, then the Spanish missionaries led by Father Kino, who built missions throughout Baja and Sonora, built an Adobe mission outpost in 1720. This is the cantina at the ranch today and billed as Arizona's oldest continually used building. In 1812, the ranch became part of Mexico when they gained their independence from Spain. In the late 1800s, it was bought by a cattle baron named Colonel William Sturgis, who built the beautiful hacienda in the center of property. Pancho Villa attempted to take it in 1916, and in 1925 it was turned into a dude ranch.

Since then, many politicians and presidents have made the journey. Lyndon B. Johnson and Franklin D. Roosevelt have been guests, along with John Wayne whose favorite room is still in use today. Plus, Zane Grey and Joan Crawford.

I love the history and I love the remoteness, but most of all I love the look and feel of the ranch. It has been impeccably preserved and maintained. The 22 rooms are all uniquely decorated and themed, and filled with antiques, art and furniture. It's like living in a museum. I really enjoyed sitting on one of the brightly painted Adirondack chairs, breathing the fresh air and taking it all in. The folks that run the ranch are a real treat. Lynne and her husband, Ross Knox, a real cowboy and poet (look him up!) are amazing hosts, and I loved getting to know them.



A mile from the ranch entrance, Sasabe is a small town of 12 people and has a local store with gas pumps (but make sure you fill up on the main highway) and an amazing bar open only on Saturdays. You're far away from everything and that's evident when you star-gaze at night.

Kitts Peak National Observatory is great to get your astronomy on. The small ranching town of Arivaca has great history, a really amazing dive bar called La Gitana Cantina and an artist co-op, as well as hiking, birding and off-roading, all worth checking out.

Leaving the ranch behind, my next stop is a couple hours away near the most famous of Old West towns, Tombstone – home of the O.K. Corral, Boothill Graveyard and the legendary Wyatt Earp.

Tombstone Monument Ranch is located just a few miles out of town and is built to look like Tombstone did back in its heyday in the 1880s. The front office is located in the saloon, where you can bust in through the swingin' doors, grab a drink at the bar and learn how to play poker or Faro, the card game of the time, dealt by a real Wyatt Earp himself! Every evening there are activities like this at the ranch, including music, dancing, games, et cetera.

The accommodations are really fun here, as it is built like the town. Each room is located on the main street with its own theme, like Miss Kitty's Bordello. I got to stay in the Wyatt Earp room. The resort was built in 2009, so the rooms are modern, spacious and have patios as well.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: White Stallion Ranch back patio; evening entertainment at Tombstone Monument Ranch; dining at Tombstone Monument Ranch; a deluxe suite bedroom at White Stallion Ranch; cattle at Rancho de la Osa; a suite at Rancho de la Osa
 COURTESY WHITE STALLION RANCH, TOMBSTONE MONUMENT RANCH, RANCHO DE LA OSA

Activities at the ranch include a Chuck wagon breakfast, and horse rides into Tombstone and its surrounds. I opted for the off-road tour to see Native American petroglyphs and the old train tracks and ruins nearby.

In my opinion, Tombstone is a little touristy, but worth it for a quick stop. The Bird Cage Theater is one of the most haunted places in the U.S., and the copper mining town of Bisbee, located about 30 minutes south, is definitely worth seeing. It feels like a time capsule of architecture and history, not to mention there are many great places to eat and shop for art and antiques.

For more natural adventures, you can head to Kartchner Caverns State Park for a tour of limestone caves. (You should call

ahead to book.) This is also Apache Country, home of the Dragoon Mountains where Chief Cochise had his stronghold.

My last stop is at White Stallion Ranch located on the north side of Tucson. The first thing I notice is how green the desert looks, and to most people's surprise, the town is cooler than Phoenix and receives summer monsoon rains. In all the years of touring and passing through the area, I had no idea the ranch existed so close to town. This, in fact, makes it a great place to get your feet wet on the dude ranch scene for the city slicker.

The ranch is 3,000 acres, and bordered by Saguaro National Park (I love it there!) and the Tucson mountains. It has 43 guest rooms, a heated pool, spa, tennis court, petting zoo and, of course, lots of horses.

I really enjoyed my time at the ranch, with its spacious and modern rooms and outdoor fireplaces all set under palo verde and mesquite trees. It's exactly what you want a hidden desert lodge to be. The second- and third-generation owners live on the property and all hands are on deck. From leading trail rides and sharing a meal in the dining room, you feel like family wherever you go.

With Tucson being so close, it makes it easy to get the best of both worlds. Trust me on this: Tucson citywide has some of the best Mexican food anywhere in the U.S. El Charro Café is a Tucson staple but I found an old-school joint that was off the charts: Mi Nidito was worth the wait!

Old Tucson is a MUST! It's a real slice of Americana that was built in 1939 as a film set and is still a working film location today. More than 400 films have been shot here. It is open daily in the winter and on weekends in the warmer months. For \$20, there is something for everyone, including rides for kids, horses, stagecoach and train tours, great food and a museum of films and props.

In and around these great ranches, if you have the time, I think it's worth checking out the Pima Air & Space Museum, the village of Tubac (which is full of galleries and shops), and the beautiful Mission San Xavier del Bac founded by Father Kino in 1692 with current construction completed in 1797.

Staying at these guest ranches is all about hospitality and community. When the chow bell rings to signal dinner is on, it reminds me that we are all in this together – and that travel and discovery are fun and easy, if you let it be. After all, it's all just a road trip away!

Follow Rick Marino's travels on rickmarinotravels.com or on Instagram @rickmarinotravels. You can also write to him with questions at rickmarino@att.net. 🌱

BEST *of the* Valley

READER'S PICKS



ABOUT TOWN

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► **WINNER: A Gallery Fine Art**

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73-956 El Paseo, Palm Desert

760-346-8885

► **FINALISTS:**

Palm Springs Art Museum

101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs

760-322-4800

psmuseum.org

Backstreet Art District

2600 Cherokee Way, Palm Springs

760-328-4144

backstreetartdistrict.com

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and authenticity is what sets them apart. The company represents 10 luxury brands in California — with additional footprints in Houston and St. Louis — and works passionately to honor the heritage of each brand through their facilities, sales teams and service departments. Learn more at bmwpalmsprings.com.
3737 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-699-2500

► **FINALISTS:**

Fiesta Ford

78990 Varner Rd., Indio

760-772-8000

fiestafordinc.com

indIGO Auto Group

71-387 Hwy. 111, Rancho Mirage

855-502-2598

indigoautogroup.com

Jessup Auto Plaza (and body shop)

68-111 E. Palm Canyon Dr.

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jessupautoplaaza.com

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Learn more at marriott.com/hotels/travel/ctdak-hotel-paseo-autograph-collection
45-400 Larkspur Ln., Palm Desert
760-340-9001

► **FINALISTS:**

Terra Cotta Clothing-Optional Resort and Spa

555 S. Warm Sands Dr., Palm Springs
760-567-8067
hotelterracotta.com

ARRIVE Palm Springs

1551 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-507-1650
arrivehotels.com

BEST CARPET CLEANING COMPANY



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PO Box 2064, Rancho Mirage
760-578-9819
smithscarpet.com

► **FINALISTS:**

Unique Touch, Inc

78265 Country Club Dr.,
Bermuda Dunes
760-835-6012
uniquetouchinc.com

Sunny Hills Chem-Dry

74804 Joni Dr., Ste. 9A, Palm Desert
760-565-0062
sunnyhillsschemdry.com

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760-325-8490

► **FINALISTS:**

Lulu California Bistro

200 S. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-327-5858
lulupalmsprings.com

Spencer's Restaurant

701 W. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs
760-327-3446
spencersrestaurant.com

BEST CHARITY



► **WINNER: Desert AIDS Project**

Founded in 1984 on love, passion and a

commitment to save lives, Desert AIDS Project (D.A.P.) is a humanitarian organization that opens its doors wider each year. Using the roadmap created during the earliest years of the AIDS crisis, D.A.P. provides holistic care to people living with HIV and is also responding to the unmet needs of its neighbors who struggle to find health and a path out of poverty, regardless of HIV status. D.A.P. is led by the communities it serves to improve the health and well-being of the whole person. Currently, D.A.P. is undergoing a bold expansion known as Vision 2020 that will enable caring for twice the number of patients as today, increasing from 4,000 to 8,000. This will add more than 20,000 square feet to the campus footprint and includes 60 additional housing units. In addition, the dental and behavioral health clinics will more than double their capacity in patients and square footage. Learn more about how you can make an impact at dapvision2020.org.

1695 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs
760-323-2118
desertaidproject.org

► **FINALISTS:**

DESERT ARC

73255 Country Club Dr., Palm Desert
760-346-1611
desertarc.org

Animal Samaritans SPCA

72120 Pet Land Pl., Thousand Palms
760-343-3477
animalsamaritans.org

BEST CONSIGNMENT STORE



► **WINNER: Revivals Stores - Palm Desert**

Revivals has three locations – Palm Springs, Cathedral City and Palm Desert — and features a collection of new and affordable Mode indoor & outdoor furniture, lighting, rugs, art and accessories. Shopping at Revivals not only affords high quality, gently used home goods, vintage clothing, art, records, books and more, but your patronage also helps to support the Desert AIDS Project. Thanks to the volunteers who largely staff the stores, Revivals is able to raise about \$1



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611 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-318-6491

► **FINALISTS:**

Angel View Resale Store - Palm Desert
 73468 Hwy. 111, Palm Desert
 760-776-9620
angelview.org

Misty's Consignments

70007 Hwy. 111, Rancho Mirage
 760-770-4663
mistysconsignments.com/Welcom

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45350 San Luis Rey Ave., Palm Desert
760-404-1949

► **FINALISTS:**

Palm Springs Florist

894 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
 760-325-7441
palmspringsflorist.net

My Little Flower Shop

861 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
 760-778-7111
mylittleflowershop.com

BEST FURNITURE STORE



► **WINNER: Revivals stores**

Revivals features three unique store locations and a collection of new and affordable Mode indoor & outdoor furniture, lighting, rugs, art and accessories. Revivals stores are a destination for bargain hunters, designers and stylists looking for unique items and creative inspiration. Shopping at Revivals not only affords high quality, gently used home goods, vintage clothing, art, records, books and more, but your patronage also helps to support the Desert AIDS Project. There's a reason it's been voted best furniture store three years in a row. To learn more, visit revivalsstores.com.
611 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-318-6491

► **FINALISTS:**

Mathis Brothers Furniture

81410 Hwy. 111, Indio
 760-863-3500
mathisbrothers.com

H3K Design

501 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
 760-325-5400
h3kdesign.com

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A neighborhood grocery store with locations in Palm Desert, Cathedral City and La Quinta, Trader Joe's carries an extensive array of domestic and imported foods and beverages. Try the artisan breads, Arabica bean coffees, international frozen entrées, juices, fresh crop nuts, deli items, vitamins and more. Stores also offer customers the basics, like milk and eggs, at honest, low prices. Find out more at locations.traderjoes.com
67720 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Cathedral City
760-202-0090

► **FINALISTS:**

WinCo Foods

42-600 Jackson St., Indio
 760-342-4138
wincofoods.com

Jensen's Finest Foods

2465 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
 760-325-8282
jensensfoods.com

BEST HEARING AID COMPANY

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73131 Country Club Dr., Ste. C Palm Desert (760) 659-3544

► **FINALISTS:**

Bellows Hearing Institute

74075 El Paseo, Palm Desert
 (760) 340-6494
bellowshearinginstitute.com

Hearing Aid HealthCare

555 S. Sunrise Way, Ste. 116, Palm Springs
 760-904-0171
hahc.net/palm-springs

BEST HEATING AND COOLING COMPANY

► **WINNER: General Heating, Air Conditioning and Plumbing**
 General Air Conditioning & Plumbing is proud to offer quality air conditioning heating, plumbing and drain cleaning services to the entire Coachella Valley.



Regular service hours are from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., with no overtime charges. But as a service company, General Air Conditioning & Plumbing knows being available when you need help is important, which is why the company's team is available 24 hours a day. General Air is not only committed to serving clients but the entire Coachella Valley by giving back to many charities, organizations and individuals in need. In addition, General Air Conditioning & Plumbing operates an in-house training facility to employ and educate valley residents in the trades. For more information, visit callthegeneral.com.

31170 Reserve Dr.,
 Thousand Palms 760-895-2500

► **FINALISTS:**

Blair Heating & Air, General Heating, Air Conditioning & Plumbing
 653 Oleander Rd., Palm Springs
 760-537-1120
blairheatingandair.com

A #1 Service Heroes

777588 El Duna Ct., Ste. F,
 Palm Desert 760-585-4478
a1svc.com



Lotus Garden Center

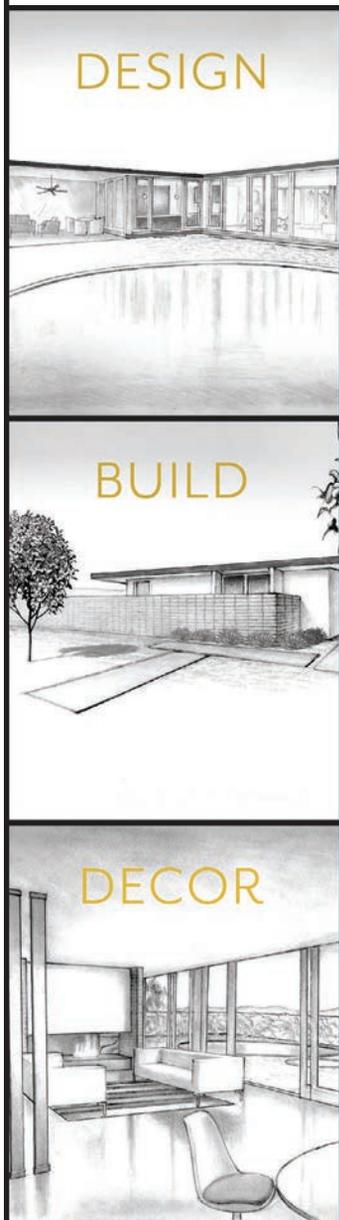
FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS, PLANTS & GARDEN ITEMS

Contact us at 760.404.1949
 or lotusgardencenter@gmail.com
 or www.lotusgardencenter.net
 Or visit us at
 45350 San Luis Rey, Palm Desert, CA



Thomas Troy Home has a unique vision for the original and innovative home utilizing space for living. The sense of openness with nature from every room including form, color and proportion are integrated with the homeowner in mind. Quiet, serene, and tranquil living with simple architectural elements that reflect uncluttered spaces. Attention to every detail is what clients have been enjoying coast to coast.

Thomas Troy Home has the ability to coordinate every phase of a renovation, new construction or decorating project including architectural design, construction, project management, and custom fabrication guaranteeing a seamless outcome. Thomas has been featured on Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles, in the Echo Magazine, and Palm Springs Life. Living in this environment is what makes Thomas Troy Home ... **the art of creative living.**



THOMAS TROY
 HOME

WWW.THOMASTROYHOME.COM
 760-883-7723



BEST HOME BUILDER



► **WINNER: Thomas Troy Home**

Thomas Troy Home has a unique vision for the original and innovative home utilizing space for living. The sense of openness with nature from every room including form, color and proportion are integrated with the homeowner in mind to create a quiet, serene and tranquil living space with simple architectural elements. Attention to every detail is what clients have been enjoying coast to coast. Thomas Troy Home has the ability to coordinate every phase of a renovation, new construction or decorating project including architectural design, construction, project management and custom fabrication guaranteeing a seamless outcome. Thomas has been featured on Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles, in the Echo Magazine and Palm Springs Life. Learn more at thomastroyhome.com. P.O. Box 2778, Rancho Mirage 760-883-7723

► **FINALISTS:**

Dantor Martinez Construction

74854 Velie Way, Palm Desert
760-702-6209
[facebook.com/DantorMartinezConstruction](https://www.facebook.com/DantorMartinezConstruction)

GHA Companies

30875 Date Palm Dr., Cathedral City
760-567-7966
ghacompanies.com

BEST HOME IMPROVEMENTS

► **WINNER: Renova Energy**

Renova Energy is the leading local solar and battery installation company in the Coachella Valley, saving its customers



more than \$3 million in energy costs last year. An employee-owned company with more than 170 team members, a campus of three buildings and a fleet of more than 80 vehicles, Renova is committed to the community and supports many area nonprofits and charitable causes. Since opening its doors in 2006, Renova has been adding to the value of desert homes and the quality of life of Coachella Valley residents. Learn more at renovaenergy.com.

75-181 Mediterranean Ave.,
Palm Desert 760-568-3413

► **FINALISTS:**

General Air Conditioning & Plumbing

31170 Reserve Dr., Thousand Palms
760-895-2500
callthegeneral.com

Ivan's Blinds and More

79485 Hwy. 111, La Quinta
760-777-7670
4ivan.com

BEST HOSPITAL



► **WINNER: Eisenhower Medical Center**

Eisenhower Health has been proud to serve the Coachella Valley for more than 45 years. With centers of excellence in cardiovascular, neuroscience, oncology and orthopedics, Eisenhower has responded to the community's growth and health needs by becoming a teaching hospital, training physicians in family and internal medicine. In 2019, Eisenhower will begin training physicians in emergency medicine. Eisenhower has also earned ANCC Magnet Recognition for professionalism in nursing and excellence in patient

care. Additional national recognition for Eisenhower's quality of care, patient safety, cardiovascular program, orthopedic program, care for LGBTQ patients and high level of employee engagement all serve as proof that Eisenhower Health's physicians, staff and volunteers want to provide nothing less than excellent patient care every day. Eisenhower thanks the community for their trust and for this Best Hospital recognition. Learn more at eisenhowerhealth.org.

39000 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
760-340-3911

► **FINALISTS:**

Desert Regional Medical Center

1150 N. Indian Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs
760-323-6511
desertcarenetwork.com

BEST HOTEL

► **WINNER: JW MARRIOTT DESERT SPRINGS RESORT & SPA**

Elegance and impeccable service are the hallmarks of JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa. Located off Country Club Drive in close proximity to McCallum Theatre, the luxury hotel showcases sophisticated accommodations on beautifully manicured resort grounds featuring waterways that can be traversed by gondolas, a flamingo island, two golf courses, tennis courts, five outdoor pools and a serene spa. Settle in to an intuitively designed room or suite, which offer plush bedding, a marble bathroom and a balcony with awe-inspiring views. Dine at one of the hotel's restaurants, offering everything from California cuisine to Japanese fare. Learn more at marriott.com/hotels/travel/ctdca-jw-marriott-desert-springs-resort-and-spa. 74-855 Country Club Dr., Palm Desert 760-341-2211

► **FINALISTS:**

HOTEL PASEO, Autograph Collection

45-400 Larkspur Ln., Palm Desert
760-340-9001
marriott.com/hotels/travel/ctdak-hotel-paseo-autograph-collection

Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs Hotel

100 W. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs
760-904-5015
rowanpalmsprings.com



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DESERT ISLES

PHONE: 760-345-3585

OFFICE@DESERTISLESINC.COM

LIC# 737763-B-C27-C53

BEST INSURANCE AGENT

► **WINNER: Thomas Gleeson, State Farm Insurance**

Providing insurance and financial services, this State Farm agent's mission is to help people manage the risks of everyday life, recover from the unexpected and realize their dreams. Service is available to residents of Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, and all other desert cities. Offering quick and accurate auto insurance quotes, focusing on homeowners insurance, Gleeson and his team can assist you with auto, homeowners, life and business insurance needs. For more information, visit teamgleeson.com.
225 S. Civic Dr. Ste. 1, Palm Springs
760-322-3100

► **FINALISTS:**

Christopher Nayfack Allstate insurance
68192 Ramon Rd., Cathedral City
760-329-2965
agents.allstate.com/ronald-nayfack-cathedral-city-ca

Guillermo Molina

82900 Ave. 42, Ste. G110,
Indio 760-347-5700
agentmolina.com

BEST JEWELER

► **WINNER: Leeds & Son Fine Jeweler**

Internationally recognized as one of Southern California's shopping destinations for fine jewelry and timepieces, Leeds & Son offers a luxury shopping experience with an exceptional selection, personal shopping service and upscale amenities. An authorized jeweler for the highest quality brands and designers, Leeds & Son is Coachella Valley's only official jeweler for Rolex, Patek Philippe, Chanel, Corum, Baume & Mercier, Tudor, and Tag Heuer, and offers jewelry from Bayco, Rahaminov Diamonds, JB Star, Marco Bicego, Lisa Nik, Lana Jewelry, Como Italia and more. Learn more at leedsandson.com.
73-670 El Paseo,
Palm Desert
760-568-5266

► **FINALISTS:**

Don Victor Jewelers
81673 Hwy. 111, Ste. 7, Indio
760-347-3547
donvictorjewelers.com

El Paseo Jewelers

73520 El Paseo, Palm Desert
760-773-1040
elpaseojewelers.com

BEST LANDSCAPE DESIGN/ARCHITECTURE



► **WINNER: Desert Isles Inc.**

Desert Isles is a full-service landscape design, architecture and general construction company. With more than 25 years of experience, the company oversees and executes all phases of the job including architectural design, construction, installation, furnishing and detailing. Desert Isles is dedicated to providing its clients with the highest quality materials, finest design and latest technologies to ensure each project is completed at the highest standard of excellence the industry has to offer. Visit desertislesinc.com for more information.
41490 Sparkey Way, Bermuda Dunes
760-345-3585

► **FINALISTS:**

Green Guys Construction
555 N. Commercial Rd., Ste. 6,
Palm Springs
760-641-7003
greenguys.net



BEST LOCAL BANK

► **WINNER: Chase Bank**

Chase Bank serves nearly half of U.S. households with a broad range of products. Chase online lets you manage your Chase accounts, view statements, monitor activity, pay bills or transfer funds securely from one central place. Learn more about Chase Bank's services by visiting chase.com.
1753 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs
760-325-1242

► **FINALISTS:**

Wells Fargo
499 S. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs
760-416-1440
wellsfargo.com

Bank of America Financial Center

1801 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-864-8584
bankofamerica.com

BEST PET BOUTIQUE



► **WINNER: Bones-n-Scones**

Bones-n-Scones is a pet nutrition center specializing in natural foods for dogs and cats. Founded in 1999 by two animal lovers who were searching for quality products for their pets, Bones-n-Scones is dedicated to natural pet nutrition and a holistic pet lifestyle. The center offers products with healthier pet food ingredients enabling your pets to have a more natural, complete and balanced diet. Not sure what diet's best for your pets? Bones-n-Scones' knowledgeable staff can recommend a proper diet for your pet. In addition to foods, nutritional supplements and toys, the center bakes its own healthy cookies, muffins, cupcakes and baked to order doggie cakes. Stop by one of our stores and check out our healthy treats, because a healthy pet is a happy pet. Learn more at bonesnscones.com.
577 E. Sunny Dunes Rd., Ste. 8,
Palm Springs
760-864-1133

► **FINALISTS:**

Miriam's Poochella Grooming
1504 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-832-6913
miriamspoochella.com

Desert's Feed Bag

83-558 Ave. 45, Indio
760-342-6602
desertfeedbag.com

Thank You!



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the Best Pet Store

bones-n-scones Your Pet's Nutrition Center



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www.bonesnscones.com

BEST PHYSICIAN



► **WINNER: Dr. Timothy Jochen**

Dr. Timothy Jochen is the founder and medical director of Contour Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery Center, serving the Coachella Valley since 2001. A board certified dermatologist, he specializes in medical dermatology including cosmetic dermatology, cosmetic surgery, treatment of skin diseases and Mohs micrographic surgery for the removal of skin cancer. Jochen, also an associate professor of dermatology at the University of Southern California, is nationally ranked in the top 1 percent of Botox injectors, the top 2 percent of CoolSculpting practices and in the top 10 for facial filler injectors. A Top Doctor as voted by his peers for the past five years, Jochen is honored to once again earn recognition as the valley's top physician. For more information, visit contourderm.com. 1180 N. Indian Canyon Dr., Ste. 419, Palm Springs 760-423-4000

► **FINALISTS:**

Dr. Jose L Fernandez
10800 Magnolia Ave., Riverside
909-353-2000
healthy.kaiserpermanente.org

Dr. Laura Rush

75036 Gerald Ford Dr.,
Palm Desert 866-984-7483
healthy.kaiserpermanente.org

BEST PLACE TO HANG OUT WITH FRIENDS



► **WINNER: ARRIVE Palm Springs**

ARRIVE Palm Springs, the first property launched under the ARRIVE brand, is a 32-room boutique hotel located in the Uptown Design District of Palm Springs. With a striking, landmark design that honors Palm Springs' rich modernist legacy, ARRIVE immerses visitors and locals in the style, tastes and lifestyle that define this desert playground. Founded by Chris Pardo and Peter Karpinski, who met while working at Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts in the late 1990s, ARRIVE hotels immerse guests in local design and tastes while creating a lively social landmark for its neighbors and visitors, anchored by unique and locally oriented restaurants, bars, retail outlets and public spaces. Learn more at arrivehotels.com. 1551 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs 760-507-1650

► **FINALISTS:**

Lulu California Bistro
200 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-346-8738
lulupalmsprings.com

Tommy Bahama
73595 El Paseo, Palm Desert
760-836-0188
tommybahama.com

BEST PLASTIC SURGEON

► **WINNER: Dr. Timothy Jochen**

What inspired Dr. Timothy Jochen to pursue dermatology is a passion to cure skin diseases and make people look and feel beautiful. Medical patients are seen with an eye for what will provide the best cosmetic result and cosmetic patients receive a focus on improving their appearance based on a solid medical foundation and proven technology. A board certified dermatologist, Jochen specializes in medical dermatol-

ogy including cosmetic dermatology, cosmetic surgery, treatment of skin diseases and Mohs micrographic surgery for the removal of skin cancer. A Castle Connolly Top Doctor as voted by his peers for the past five years in a row, Dr. Jochen is honored to be voted a "Best of the Valley" physician and plastic surgeon by the community he loves and serves.

For more information, visit contourderm.com
1180 N. Indian Canyon Dr., Ste. 419,
Palm Springs
760-423-4000

► **FINALISTS:**

Dr. Mark V. Sofonio
39000 Bob Hope Dr., Kiewit Bld., Ste.
407, Rancho Mirage 760-341-5555
drsofonio.com

Desert Hand & Plastic Surgery Center

72650 Fred Waring Dr., Palm Desert
760-779-5700

BEST PRIVATE GOLF COMMUNITY

► **WINNER: BIGHORN Golf Club**



Long recognized among the world's most celebrated private clubs, BIGHORN is the Coachella Valley's premier luxury lifestyle community, featuring award-winning residential architecture and home sites. Set 1,000 feet above the desert floor against the striking backdrop of the Santa Rosa Mountains, it is a serene, protected enclave where members can experience the best life has to offer. Residents enjoy an array of amenities including two championship golf courses, the new 80,000-square-foot clubhouse with four unique penthouses, a world-class spa and wellness center, a one-of-a-kind auto gallery, two dog parks, seven indoor/outdoor dining venues, the Marketplace with Starbucks, private transportation services, and a spectacular social calendar of activities. Since 2006, BIGHORN charities have given more than \$11

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million to local nonprofit organizations. Learn more at bighorn-golf.com.
255 Palowet Dr., Palm Desert
760-341-4653

► **FINALISTS:**

The Quarry at La Quinta
1 Quarry Ln., La Quinta
760-777-1100
thequarrygc.com

**PGA West Private Clubhouses
& Golf Courses**
55-955 PGA Blvd, La Quinta
760-564-7111
pgawest.com

BEST REAL ESTATE FIRM

► **WINNER: Tarbell Realtors**

Established in 1926, Tarbell Realtors is not just family owned, but family operated — with an emphasis on service, integrity and professionalism. What sets the firm apart is its close connection to the communities they serve because buying and selling real estate is often a very personal transaction. What is more personal than helping someone find the place they're going to call home? Recently named by the National Association of Realtors as one of the top 75 largest brokerages, Tarbell is proud to be the local, hometown real estate firm with a global reach. For more information, visit tarbell.com.

211 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-322-1711

► **FINALISTS:**

Whitestar Management
72000 Magnesia Falls Dr., Ste. 3,
Rancho Mirage 760-773-0123
whitestarmgmt.com

Leaskou Partners, Inc.

200 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs
760-646-8886
leaskoupartners.com

BEST REALTOR

► **WINNER: Joe Woods**

With 30 years of real estate experience, Joe Woods' hard work and dedication to his clients make him the top of the class of the local industry. As the top vote-getter in his Best of the Valley category for four consecutive years, it's easy to see why Woods has become a popular choice for real estate services. Woods leverages his passion for homes to help buyers and



sellers accomplish their goals. His attention to detail, vast market knowledge, humble approach and commitment to offering unparalleled client service keep him at the top of the greater Palm Springs area real estate market, where he has etched his legacy as an exceptional agent who delivers outstanding results. For more information, visit bdhomes.com/agent_profile.asp?id=1495
850 N. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-567-3880

► **FINALISTS:**

Rhonda Belous

72000 Magnesia Falls Dr., Ste 3
Rancho Mirage 760-219-6336
homes.com/real-estate-agents/rhonda-belous

Rob Zwemmer

75486 Augusta Dr., Indian Wells
760-610-0204
zwemmerrealty.com

BEST RESALE STORE

► **WINNER: Revivals Stores**

Revivals features three unique store locations and a collection of new and affordable Mode indoor and outdoor furniture, lighting, rugs, art and accessories. Revivals stores are a destination for bargain hunters, designers and stylists looking for unique items and creative inspiration. Shopping at Revivals not only affords high quality, gently used home goods, vintage clothing, art, records, books and more, but your patronage also helps to support the Desert AIDS Project. There's a reason it's been voted best furniture store three years in a row. To learn more, visit revivalsstores.com.

611 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
Palm Springs 760-318-6491

► **FINALISTS:**

Angel View Resale Stores

454 N. Indian Canyon Dr.
Palm Springs 760-320-1733
angelview.org

Estate Sale Co.

4185 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-318-6491
theestatesaleco.com

BEST SOLAR COMPANY

► **WINNER: Renova Energy**

A SunPower Elite dealer and a certified installer for the Tesla Powerwall, Renova Energy is the leading local solar and battery installation company in the Coachella Valley. An employee-owned company with more than 170 team members, a campus of three buildings and a fleet of more than 80 vehicles, Renova is committed to the community and supports many area nonprofits and charitable causes. Since opening its doors in 2006, Renova has garnered many accolades for the service it provides Coachella Valley residents including, most recently, Business of the Year for the 28th Senate District, Business of the Year from the Desert Business Association, and Large Business of the Year from the Rancho Mirage Chamber of Commerce. Learn more at renovaenergy.com.
75-181 Mediterranean Ave.
Palm Desert 760-568-3413

► **FINALISTS:**

Hot Purple Energy

810 N. Farrell Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-322-4433
hotpurpleenergy.com

FreeVolt USA

42005 Cook St., Ste. 310, Palm Desert
760-345-0080
freevolt.com

BEST WEDDING VENUE

► **WINNER: The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage**

The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage is proud to offer a spectacular wedding package and wedding cuisine that will create true Ritz-Carlton memories for wedding couples and their guests. Our caring and attentive event managers specialize in luxury weddings and are committed to providing the finest service experience available. For more information, visit ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/california/rancho-mirage.
68900 Frank Sinatra Dr., Rancho Mirage
760-321-8282

► **FINALISTS:**

Spencer's Restaurant

701 W. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs
760-327-3446
spencersrestaurant.com



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www.WhiteStarMgmt.com



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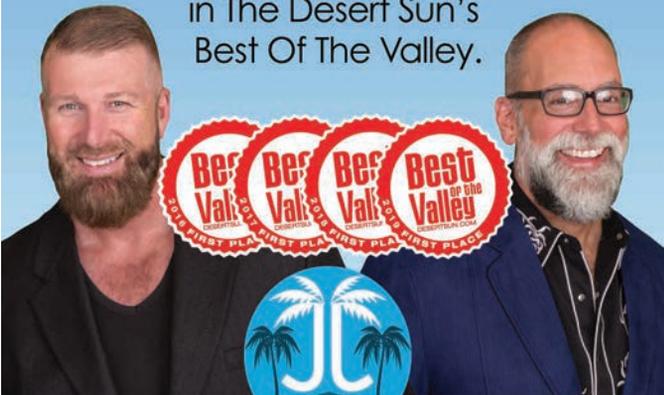
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Cell: 760-567-3880 Cell: 760-898-8857
joe@HomesInTheDesert.net john@HomesInTheDesert.net

bennion deville
HOMES
CalBRE#01325548

800 N. Palm Canyon Drive Palm Springs, CA 92262



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KMORRIS@THEAGENCYRE.COM

LIC# 01974781

Jackalope Ranch
80400 Hwy. 111, Indio
760-342-1999
thejackaloperanch.com

BARS AND NIGHTLIFE

BEST CLASSIC COCKTAIL

► **WINNER: Blackbook Bar**

Named after the official government 'blacklist of people unwelcome in casinos in Nevada, the team at Blackbook Bar believes everyone at some point in his or her life has felt like a misfit, unwelcome or alone just because they are different. At Blackbook, everyone is welcome. It's why 'Black' is backwards in the name. The bar blacklists the blacklist.

Blackbook is an inclusion bar, with the highest quality food and drink in Palm Springs. Find a huge selection of spirits to choose from or dabble with Palm Springs' largest whiskey collection — 250 varieties and counting. Blackbook offers more than 60 different tequilas, 25 gins and 50 different kinds of beer. The bar's famous cocktails are made with the freshest ingredients, including fresh lime, lemon and orange juice and served in large glasses. Blackbook always maintains the best quality at a fair price. Find out more at blackbookbar.com.
760-832-8497

► **FINALISTS:**

Lulu California Bistro
200 S. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-327-5858
lulupalmsprings.com

The Tropicale
330 E. Amado Rd., Palm Springs
760-866-1952
thetropicale.com

BEST DANCE SPOT



► **WINNER: Zelda's Nightclub**

Zelda's Nightclub has been providing the hottest dance sounds in downtown

Palm Springs since 1977. Spinning the best in top 40 pop, hiphop, EDM, house, and Latin hits, Zelda's newly remodeled location features five full bars and the friendliest bar staff in the Coachella Valley. Bottle service is available at all tables — including VIP Booths and Skybox above the expansive dance floor. Zelda's also sports a stage for special events and has a phenomenal sound and lighting system to set the perfect mood. Food is available at the Taco and Quesadilla bar. Zelda's is handicap accessible and has ample parking. For more information, visit zeldasnightclub.com.

611 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-325-2375

► **FINALISTS:**

Hunters Nightclub
302 E. Arenas Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-323-0700
gateway.huntersnightclubs.com

Toucans Tiki Lounge

2100 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-416-7584
toucanstikilounge.com

BEST DIVE JOINT

► **WINNER: Neil's Lounge**

A classic local bar with a Southwestern flair, Neil's Lounge offers steaks, burgers, melts and a host of other sandwiches at its Western Grill with an all-day \$5 menu. But Neil's greatest claim to fame is its live music and karaoke jam sessions, starting nightly at 8 p.m. You'll find local crooners, out-of-town visitors and people who love to belt out a tune come out to take part in the fun — sometimes you may even get to see a celebrity. Neil's Lounge is located off Highway 111 in Indio.

80956 Hwy. 111, Indio
760-347-1522
neilsounge.food95.com

► **FINALISTS:**

Pete's Hideaway
665 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-322-6500
peteshideawayps.com

Blackbook Bar

315 E. Arenas Rd., Palm Springs
760-832-8497
blackbookbar.com

BEST HAPPY HOUR



► **WINNER: Lulu California Bistro**

At Lulu California Bistro encounter the desert's best Happy Hour from 8 to 12 a.m., every day. With several exciting martini, margarita, mojito, tequila and cocktail concoctions to go along with a vast array of wines, ports, cognacs and beers — domestic and imported — Lulu has all the delights you need in an ambiance that embraces the dynamic downtown Palm Spring scene. For those that want a bite to eat, an award-winning three-course menu is offered beginning at 11 a.m. Learn more at lulupalmsprings.com.
200 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-327-5858

► **FINALISTS:**

Yard House
71800 Hwy. 111, Ste. B-101,
Rancho Mirage 760-779-1415
yardhouse.com

THE TROPICALE

330 E. Amado Rd., Palm Springs
760-866-1952
thetropicale.com

A | C | 3

RESTAURANT + BAR

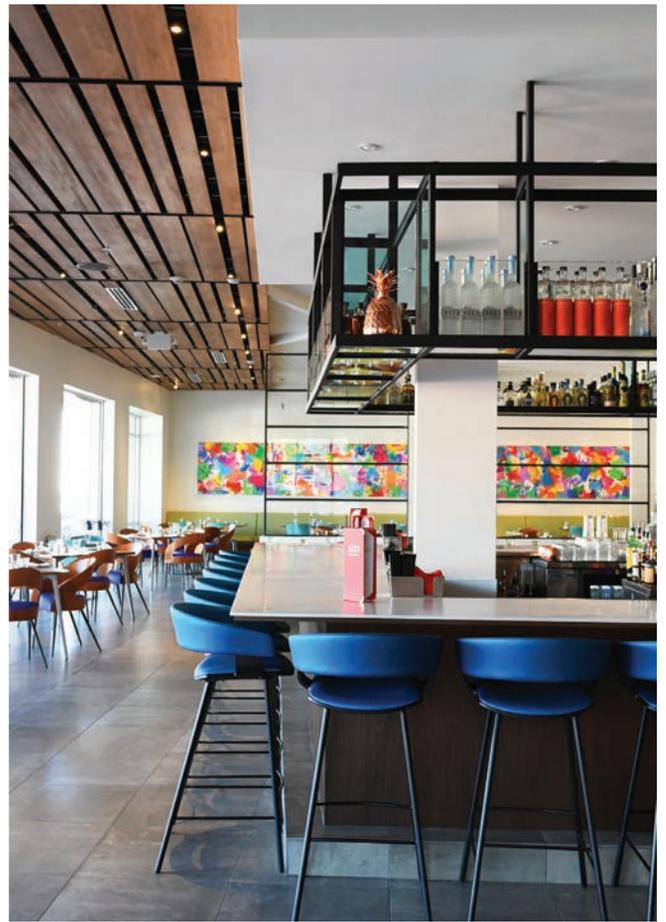
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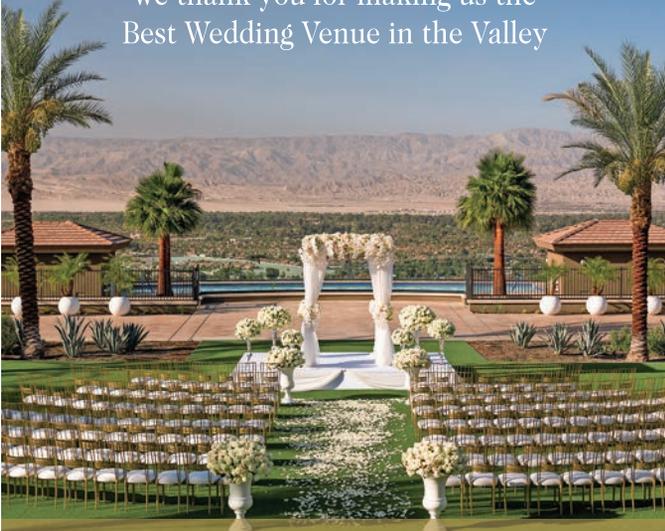
**45350 LARKSPUR LANE
PALM DESERT, CA
760-340-6069**

AC3PALMDESERT.COM





On behalf of the Ladies and Gentlemen of
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BEST MARGARITA

► **WINNER: Fresh Agave Mexican Bar & Grill**

In keeping with its Mexican traditions, Fresh Agave Mexican Bar & Grill showcases integral parts of its beloved heritage through its comfort food and warm hospitality. The idea for Fresh Agave came to its owners, Rigo and Cecilia Garcia, when they were traveling through parts of Mexico — encompassed by vast azure fields of agave and framed by clear blue skies providing a feeling of peacefulness and refreshment. It's those same emotions the restaurant aims to make its guests feel. Located in the heart of Palm Desert, Fresh Agave Mexican Bar & Grill is a restaurant that blends traditional and contemporary Mexican cuisines using only the finest ingredients and greatest of care to prepare its extraordinary dishes. The restaurant offers 11 different margarita concoctions including its popular namesake drink — the Fresh Agave Margarita. For more information, visit freshagavemexicanbarandgrill.com. 73325 Hwy. 111, Palm Desert 760-836-9028

► **FINALISTS:**

Lulu California Bistro

200 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-327-5858
lulupalmsprings.com

Las Casuelas Terraza

222 S. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-325-2794
lascasuelas.com

BEST MARTINI

► **WINNER: Lulu California Bistro**

Experience one of 10 exquisite martini creations at Lulu California Bistro. Whether it's time-tested favorites like the classic Manhattan or something sweet like the Chocolatini's decadent marriage of Skyy Vanilla Vodka and Godiva White Chocolate Liqueur, at Lulu you'll always find exciting, high-quality creations. Learn more at lulupalmsprings.com. 200 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs 760-327-5858

► **FINALISTS:**

AC3

45350 Larkspur Ln., Palm Desert
760-340-6069
ac3palmdesert.com

Bernie's Lounge and Supper Club

69830 Hwy. 111,
Rancho Mirage 760-202-4499
bernies.club

BEST SPORTS BAR

► **WINNER: Big Rock Pub**

There is a special look on the face of a person who has walked into Big Rock Pub for the first time — a look of awe and surprise. It's one of the best parts of being a Big Rock Pub team member. Every single instrument, piece of art and memorabilia was individually purchased and hung by owner Ken Hanna. Yes, he really does love the music and its history but there's a much deeper meaning. Not too long ago, Hanna lost his brother to cancer, so many of the autographed guitars



you see are for sale, with all of the profits going to Desert Cancer Foundation. Desert Cancer Foundation is the only nonprofit organization in the Coachella Valley that provides financial assistance to qualified patients in the midst of cancer screenings and treatments. Every dollar donated translates into \$10 of cancer treatment. In its first months of opening, Big Rock Pub has raised over \$40,000 for DCF and thousands more for other local charities. At the Big Rock Pub it's not just about providing great food and a great ambiance, it's also about making a difference. For more information, visit thebigrockpub.com. 79940 Westward Ho Dr., Indio 760-200-9844

► **WINNER: Stuff Pizza Bar & Grill**

With locations in Palm Desert and La Quinta, Stuff Pizza is a family-owned



restaurant that offers so much more than pizza. At Stuff Pizza, customers will find more than 100 menu items ranging from sandwiches and fish tacos to pastas and steaks. A full bar offers craft beer and an award-winning wine list that includes more than 30 wines by the glass. With one of the most popular happy hours in town, Stuff Pizza's fabulous food and drink specials are offered throughout the restaurant. Guests come for great service and food, but stay for the latest games on our many big screen televisions. Dine in or take out with easy ordering online, either way you'll be Stuff. Learn more at stuffpizzabarandgrill.com 72840 Hwy. 111, Ste. 465, Palm Desert 760-610-7990

► **FINALIST:**

Jackalope Ranch

80400 Hwy. 111, Indio
760-342-1999
thejackaloperanch.com

BEST WINE BAR

► **WINNER: Zin American Bistro**

An essential Palm Springs dining experience since 2004, Zin American Bistro continues to be one of the most celebrated restaurants in the heart of downtown Palm Springs. Located at 198 S. Palm Canyon Dr., find out more about the bistro at zinamericanbistro.com. 198 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs 760-322-6300

► **FINALISTS:**

Counter Reformation

4200 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-770-5000
parkerpalmsprings.com

Twelve (The 12th Floor Lounge)

84-245 Indio Springs Pkwy., Indio
800-827-2946
fantasyspringsresort.com

BODY & SOUL BEST FITNESS CLASS



► WINNER: Dedicated Strength

Dedicated Strength was started after Ashley Robertson lost her father and best friend to cancer. It's at that time Robertson found that working out and getting healthy worked as her therapy. With a National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) background, Robertson's gym specializes in personal training and bootcamp classes. Dedicated Strength is an environment where everyone can feel comfortable and its mission is to help guide people to healthier lifestyles. Learn more at dedicatedstrengthcali.com.
B-81101 Indio Blvd., Ste. 14, Indio
760-222-4444

► FINALISTS:

Thrive Fitness Studio

77750 Country Club Dr., Palm Desert
760-913-7424
thriveforeverfit.com

EnerGym Palm Desert

74836 Technology Dr., Ste. 102,
Palm Desert 760-610-1545
energymrealfitness.com

BEST HAIR STYLIST

► WINNER: ADRIAN ALCANTAR HAIR

Adrian Alcantar is humbled and offers his thanks to this year's "Best of Valley" voters for recognizing his work for a second time. Alcantar said working in a creative field has always been a dream and he is excited and feels fortunate every day to have the opportunity to make a small difference in the lives of his clients by helping them to make a memorable first impression, with great hair. Visit the new salon at 1717 E. Vista Chino, Ste. B-1 to check out the new space and services. The studios offer a fresh environment with services from head to toe. Learn more at adrianalcantarhairstudios.com.
1717 E. Vista Chino, Ste. B-1,
Palm Springs 760-537-7287

► FINALISTS:

Carly Champagne (Alter Ego Salon)

72880 Fred Waring Dr., Ste. A1,
Palm Desert 760-275-0843
[facebook.com/AlterEgoSalonPD](https://www.facebook.com/AlterEgoSalonPD)

Dizzy at Downtown Barbers Palm Springs

333 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Ste. 205,
Palm Springs 760-285-9280
downtownbarbersps.com

BEST SPA



► WINNER: Feel Good Spa

Feel Good Spa's healers use organic botanicals made from pure, natural ingredients. Located at the Ace Hotel & Swim Club, the spa's calming surroundings, steam room, along with massages and treatments help to do the good work that engages the physiological and spiritual aspects of your well-being. The treatments are both practical and indulgent, with an emphasis on the pleasurable enhancement of health. Individual and group bookings are available. Find out more at acehotel.com/palmsprings
701 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-866-6188

► FINALISTS:

European Experience Luxury Facials & Massages

2225 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Ste. 6,
Palm Springs 760-902-2751
palmspringsfacials.com

Countour Dermatology and Cosmetic Surgery Center

1180 N. Indian Canyon Dr., Ste. 419,
Palm Springs 760-423-4000
contourderm.com

BEST YOGA STUDIO

► WINNER: Desert Yoga Therapy

Desert Yoga Therapy is a serene yoga studio located in the heart of Rancho Mirage, carefully designed with warmth and community in mind. Local artists and community members have helped to put loving details into the studio, making it an inviting and unique



environment to practice yoga. The studio specializes in therapeutic, restorative, gentle, Vinyasa, chair, meditation, and trauma-sensitive yoga. Workshops and teacher training for both 200-hour RYT courses, restorative intensives and advanced studies programs affiliated with Yoga Alliance are available. For those unable to make it to the studio, a subscription service is available. Learn more at desertyogatherapy.com.
71843 Hwy. 111, Rancho Mirage
760-456-5160

► FINALISTS:

Bikram Yoga Plus - Coachella Valley

36869 Cook St., Ste. 101, Palm Desert
760-346-2988
coachellayoga.com

Urban Yoga Center

1695 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs
760-320-7702
urbanyoga.org

BEST CASINO

► WINNER: Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa

When you crave the perfect mix of casual elegance and excitement, you'll find it at Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa. A luxurious resort with a cool laid-back attitude, no detail is overlooked at this AAA Four Diamond resort with spacious guest rooms, an award-winning spa, sparkling pools, world-class entertainment, restaurants and bars. Each of the hotel's 340 guest rooms are generously appointed with cozy bedding, flat-screen televisions and sunken tubs. In the casino you'll find slots, video poker and table games — including Coachella Valley's only private poker room and high-limit gaming in an upscale, private atmosphere. Spend the day in a poolside cabana and the night at the casino, or unwind at Sunstone Spa. Enjoy spectacular entertainment at The Show. For more information, visit hotwatercasino.com.
32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
888-999-1995

► **FINALISTS:**

Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84245 Indio Springs Pkwy., Indio
760-342-5000
fantasyspringsresort.com

Spa Resort Casino
401 E. Amado Rd., Palm Springs
888-999-1995
sparesortcasino.com

BEST FESTIVAL/FAIR



► **WINNER: Stagecoach Festival**
Founded by Paul Tollett, the Stagecoach Festival is an outdoor country music festival presented by Goldenvoice, The Messina Group and Moore Entertainment. The festival is held at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, Calif. Various artists attend, whether they be mainstream or relatively unknown — ranging from folk, mainstream country, bluegrass, roots rock and alternative country. Learn more at stagecoachfestival.com.
Empire Polo Club, Indio
855-801-5706

► **FINALIST: Coachella Music Festival**
Empire Polo Club, Indio
855-771-3667
coachella.com

Modernism Week
Greater Palm Springs Area
modernismweek.com

BEST FUNDRAISING EVENT

► **WINNER: Evening Under the Stars**
Evening Under the Stars is the largest annual fundraiser for AAP – Food Samaritans, a nonprofit organization that provides nutritional support for low-income people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses. Tickets for the benefit are available for purchase now. For more information, visit aidsassistance.org/evening-under-the-stars.
The O'Donnell Golf Club in Palm Springs
760-325-8481

► **FINALISTS:**

**American Cancer Society
Desert Spirit Gala**
Heckmann Estate in Rancho Mirage
760-340-6315
acsbsr.ejoinme.org

Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards
Palm Springs Convention Center
760-323-2118
desertaidproject.org

BEST LIVE THEATER

► **WINNER: Coachella Valley Repertory**
The Coachella Valley Repertory is a not-for-profit theater company now celebrating its 10th anniversary. Having outgrown its rented 88-seat, Rancho Mirage theater, the repertory will soon move to its own, bigger, more technically advanced 209-seat playhouse in Cathedral City. The critically-acclaimed theater company has Small Professional Theatre status with Actors' Equity, and presents high-quality, thought-provoking plays, musicals, dance, cabaret, jazz and classical music performances. Acting classes are available for children and adults, as well as writing workshops, and youth outreach programs. Learn more at cvrep.org.
**69930 Hwy. 111, Ste. 116,
Rancho Mirage 760-296-2966**

► **FINALISTS:**
McCallum Theatre
73000 Fred Waring Dr., Palm Desert
760-340-2787
mccallumtheatre.com

Desert Ensemble Theatre Company
314 S. Cahuilla Rd., Palm Springs
760-565-2476
detctheatre.org

BEST MOVIE THEATER

► **WINNER: Century @ The River
Cinemark Theatre**
The amazing THX Certified XD auditorium has the largest screen in the building, and its wall-to-wall with a state-of-the-art projector capable of 35 trillion colors. Customers will also find custom surround sound with more speakers. You won't just be watching a movie, you'll feel like you're in the movie. For more, go to cinemark.com.
**71800 Hwy. 111, Ste. A-137,
Rancho Mirage
760-836-1940**

► **FINALISTS:**

Mary Pickford Theatre
36850 Pickfair St., Cathedral City
760-328-7444
dplaceentertainment.com

Camelot Theatres
2300 E. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs
760-325-6565
camelottheatres.com

BEST POOL PARTY

► **WINNER: Saguaro Palm Springs**
The Saguaro is known for pool parties throughout the year and serves as one of three host hotels for the annual Splash House — featuring a weekend of electronic music poolside and shuttles transport. For more information, visit thesaguaro.com/palm-springs.
**1800 E. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs
760-323-1711**

► **FINALISTS:**
Ace Hotel & Swim Club
701 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-325-9900
acehotel.com/palmsprings

**JW Marriott Desert Springs
Resort & Spa**
74-855 Country Club Dr.,
Palm Desert 760-341-2211
marriott.com

BEST REPERTORY COMPANY



► **WINNER: Coachella Valley Repertory**
One of the Coachella Valley Repertory's main tenants is to provide thought-provoking theater of substance to the residents and visitors of Coachella Valley. As the theater company celebrates its 10th anniversary, it will continue to offer plays that are both entertaining and meaningful. The youth outreach program will enlighten young audiences with topics

that reflect their everyday life, especially regarding the epidemic of bullying. Throughout the year, and primarily in the summer, Coachella Valley Repertory offers a variety of entertainment, including cabaret, jazz, dance, classical and one-act plays. Learn more at cvrep.org.
**69930 Hwy. 111, Ste. 116,
Rancho Mirage 760-296-2966**

► **FINALISTS:**

Desert Ensemble Theatre Co.
314 S. Cahuilla Rd., Palm Springs
760-565-2476
detctheatre.org

Coyote StageWorks

101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs
760-318-0024
coyotestageworks.org

Dezart Performs

314 S. Cahuilla Rd., Palm Springs
760-322-0179
dezartperforms.org

BEST VENUE TO HEAR MUSIC



► **WINNER: McCallum Theatre**

The McCallum Theatre's mission is to entertain and educate the public by offering a variety of performing arts experiences that reflect the diversity of people, interests and tastes of the Coachella Valley communities. Named for a pioneering desert family, the McCallum has gained acclaim as one of the country's finest presenting theaters by audiences, entertainers and peers alike. Learn more at mccallumtheatre.com.
**73000 Fred Waring Dr., Palm Desert
760-340-2787**

► **FINALISTS:**

Pappy & Harriets Pioneertown Palace
53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown
760-365-5956
pappyandharriets.com

The Show at Agua Caliente

32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
888-999-1995
hotwatercasino.com

FOOD & DRINK

BEST ASIAN

► **WINNER: Fuzion Five**

Vietnam and Laos are neighboring countries that not only share a border, but also a taste for herbs and spices. Fuzion Five brings you the best Vietnamese and Lao cuisine, fusing home cooking techniques with modern presentation. Only the freshest ingredients are used to elevate traditional flavors that will awaken your senses and create an unforgettable dining experience. Learn more at fuzionfive.com
**285 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-322-6162**

► **FINALISTS:**

Thai Smile

100 S. Indian Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-320-5503
thaismilepalmsprings.com

Rooster And The Pig

356 S. Indian Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-832-6691
roosterandthepig.com

BEST BBQ



► **WINNER: Babe's Bar-B-Que & Steakhouse**

Babe's Bar-B-Que & Brewery has been serving award-winning beers, delicious ribs, smokehouse sandwiches, brew house burgers and much more since opening in 2002. Now under the leadership of Lucky Callender, the family legacy continues at the only brewery in Rancho Mirage, and the oldest in the Coachella Valley. Find out more at babesbbqandbrewhouse.com
**71800 Hwy. 111, Ste. A176,
Rancho Mirage
760-346-8738**

► **FINALISTS:**

Jackalope Ranch

80400 Hwy. 111, Indio
760-342-1999
thejackaloperanch.com

Smoketree BBQ

1775 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Ste. 405
Palm Springs 760-778-6521
smoketreebbq.com

BEST BURGER

► **WINNER: Grill-A-Burger**

Recently featured by Guy Fieri on the Food Network's "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" and voted one of the nation's top 5 burger joints by TripAdvisor reviews, Grill-A-Burger clearly has a passion for hamburgers! Burgers are made the old-fashioned way using only the finest and freshest ingredients available. With more than 30 beef burgers, dozens of chicken and turkey burger choices, hand-cut, never frozen French fries, fresh salads and creative hot dogs, Grill-A-Burger has something to please everyone. A Coachella Valley staple for more than a decade, Grill-A-Burger gives back to its community by supporting local and national charities, as well as working with local vendors. For more information, visit grill-a-burger.com.
**73091 Country Club Dr.
Palm Desert 760-346-8170**

► **FINALISTS:**

Tyler's Burgers

149 S. Indian Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-325-2990
tylersburgers.com

Draughtsman

1501 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-507-1644
draughtsmanpalmsprings.com

BEST COFFEE



► **WINNER: Koffi**

Koffi café, in central Palm Springs, is the largest independent specialty coffee retailer and roaster in the Coachella Valley. Stop off at any of its five locations — 650 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way in Kaptur Plaza, Palm Canyon Drive, North Palm Springs at

The Corridor in the Uptown district, South Palm Springs near the Ace Hotel, or Rancho Mirage near the landmark Pink Elephant Car Wash — for a great cup of joe. Cafes are open from 5:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, visit kofficoffee.com.

515 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-416-2244

► **FINALISTS:**

IW Coffee

74-995 Hwy. 111, Indian Wells
760-346-6757
facebook.com/IW-coffee-1402421566753897

Ernest Coffee

1101 N. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-318-4154
ernestcoffee.com

BEST ITALIAN

► **WINNER: Mario's Italian Cafe**

In 1972 the Del Guidice family moved from New York and settled in the Coachella Valley, where they started a tradition of quality foods and service. At Mario's Italian Café you'll find old-world-style family recipes — reaching back five generations to Naples, Italy — for the authentic flavor that is uniquely Mario's. More than four decades later and the Del Guidice family's commitment to the Coachella Valley is as strong as ever with seven restaurants. The Mario's commitment to the community is seen throughout the year with sponsorship for several local organizations such as Desert Arc, Relay for Life, Make-A-Wish and the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission. Mario's provides more than 12,000 meals annually to help these groups raise money for their various causes. Mario and family encourage you to participate and join us in our year-round efforts to support these vital organizations. Learn more at mariositaliancafes.com.

72624 El Paseo

Palm Desert 760-322-6636

► **FINALISTS:**

Piero's PizzaVino

73722 El Paseo, Ste. 1, Palm Desert
760-568-2525
ppizzavino.com

Ristorante Mamma Gina

73705 El Paseo, Palm Desert
760-568-9898
mammagina.com

Sammy G's Tuscan Grill

265 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-320-8041
sammysrestaurant.com

BEST LATE NIGHT BITES

► **WINNER: Lulu California Bistro**

At Lulu California Bistro, talent, expertise and a passion for great food combine to produce a captivating dining experience. Menu options are both varied and value-priced. The quality is always high. Generous portions are prepared with fresh ingredients and a dash of innovation from award-winning chefs. Freshly baked bread and decadent desserts are made in-house daily, and are perfectly complemented by a cappuccino, latte or an endless pot of fresh brewed coffee. Learn more about what Lulu has to offer by visiting lulupalmsprings.com.

200 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-327-5858

► **FINALISTS:**

Kaiser Grille Palm Springs

205 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-323-1003
kaisergrille.com

Bongo Johnny's Patio Bar & Grille

214 E. Arenas Rd., Palm Springs
760-866-1905

BEST MEXICAN



► **WINNER: Las Casuelas Terraza**

Las Casuelas Terraza is proud to be recognized again for the "Best Mexican Food" by Best of the Valley. Part of a 60-year tradition of fine Mexican-American cuisine in the desert, the restaurant was founded by pioneer restaurateurs Florencio and Maria Delgado. Now owned by Patty Delgado Service, Las Casuelas Terraza continues that legacy of authentic recipes and incomparable

hospitality. A favorite of locals and visitors alike, it has won numerous industry awards over the years. It was also named one of *Hispanic* magazine's "Top 50 Best Hispanic Restaurants in America," and one of the "Top 21 Mexican restaurant In America" by the editors of Thrillist. For more information, visit lascasuelas.com.

222 S. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-325-2794

► **FINALISTS:**

Fresh Agave Mexican Bar & Grill

73325 Hwy. 111,
Palm Desert 760-836-9028
freshagavemexicanbarandgrill.com

El Jefe

1800 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-323-1711
thesaguaro.com

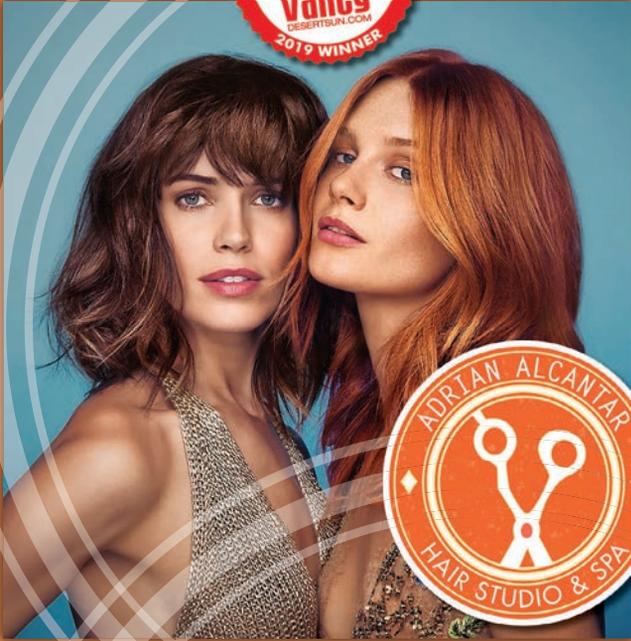
BEST NEW RESTAURANT OPENED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



► **WINNER: AC3**

Palm Desert's newest hotspot, AC3 Restaurant + Bar, unites the culinary and hospitality talents of three acclaimed desert restauranteurs. Executive Chef Andrew Copley and Juliana Copley (Copley's on Palm Canyon) have joined forces with Tony Marchese (TRIO). AC3's light and bright modern interior is full of energy. The restaurant features high ceilings, an inviting bar and a large patio with stunning views of the San Jacinto Mountains. AC3 puts forth a distinct style of new American cuisine that incorporates eclectic, international influences into classic dishes. A full bar

THANKS FOR
VOTING!



1717 E. Vista Chino Suite B-1 | Palm Springs, CA 92262

760-537-7287

www.AdrianAlcantarHairStudios.com

FISHERMAN'S MARKET & GRILL

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and our Staff, wish
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and again, for voting us
the #1 Best Seafood Restaurant; now
for Nineteen (19) Consecutive Years!
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FISHERMAN'S MARKET & GRILL

"The Fresh Fish Joint"



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(760) 327-1766

FISHERMAN'S M&G PALM DESERT
(760) 776-6533

FISHERMAN'S M&G LA QUINTA
(760) 777-1601

FISHERMAN'S GROTTTO
(760) 776-6534

FISHERMAN'S LANDING
(760) 423-6079

SHANGHAI REDS
(760) 322-9293

LITTLE FISHERMEN'S
(714) 952-9465



FISHERMANS.COM

"Father and Sons to serve you"



To All of Our Friends

*Thank you for voting Mario's
the best Italian Restaurants
in the Coachella Valley*

MARIO'S ITALIAN CAFES

Bermuda Dunes - La Quinta

Sun City - Palm Springs - Palm Desert

Coachella - Indio

serves up handcrafted cocktails, California craft beers, with a daily happy hour and bar bites menu. Open for breakfast, lunch, dinner and a prefix menu from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. daily. Visit ac3palmdesert.com for more information.

45350 Larkspur Ln., Palm Desert
760-340-6069

► **FINALISTS:**

Acqua California Bistro

71-700 Hwy. 111, Rancho Mirage
760-862-9800
acquaranchomirage.com

Wexler's @ ARRIVE

71-700 Hwy. 111, Rancho Mirage
760-507-1640
wexlersdeli.com

BEST PET FRIENDLY RESTAURANT

► **WINNER: Blackbook Bar**

At Blackbook, everyone is welcome — especially your pets. Blackbook is about inclusion and should that only apply to two-legged guests? Of course not! Blackbook loves animals — its parent company is called Hunter J. Dog, LLC, named after the coolest dog ever. In fact, you can often catch the owner offering free bacon to our four-legged guests, once he gets permission from their two-legged friends, of course. The bar has a great patio where Fido can hang out with you and your friends while you enjoy a mimosa made with fresh juice and some of our famous vodka French toast during brunch. Or come in during happy hour, 4-6 p.m., or naughty Hour, from 10 p.m. to midnight, and make some new friends, two or four legged. Find out more at blackbookbar.com.

315 E. Arenas Rd., Palm Springs
760-832-8497

► **FINALISTS:**

La Quinta Baking Company

78395 Hwy. 111,
La Quinta 760-777-1699
laquintabaking.com

Spencer's Restaurant

701 W. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs
760-327-3446
spencersrestaurant.com

BEST PIZZA

► **WINNER: Pieology Pizzeria**

Pieology is not just another create-your-own pizzeria — it's here to nourish

and inspire by serving creativity and celebrating people coming together to connect. It's a bigger vision, filled with purpose, for pizza, people and passion. Before embarking on this create-your-own pizza experience, Pieology's story began in the kitchen with its founder, his wife and daughters — and a plan to share time together. From that day on, Pieology would forever be a fresh retreat from the everyday hustle and bustle, where the only thing more important than quality food is quality people to share it with. For more information, visit pieology.com/locations/CA/rancho-mirage-las-palmas.

42500 Bob Hope Dr., Ste. C,
Rancho Mirage
760-674-7117

► **FINALISTS:**

Bill's Pizza

119 S. Indian Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-325-5571
billspizzapalmsprings.com

Stuft Pizza Bar & Grill

72840 Hwy. 111, Ste. 465,
Palm Desert 760-610-7990
stuftpizzabarandgrill.com

BEST ROMANTIC AMBIANCE



► **WINNER: Blackbook**

To be honest, we were a little surprised to win this category. In the traditional sense, these are some incredibly beautiful restaurants that should not be missed: Le Vallauris, Copley's, The Edge Steakhouse, Mr. Lyons, La Spiga, and Morgans. We are not so traditional. The magic that happens here at Blackbook is entirely different. Our romance comes from people connecting with each other. Our bar is built on sharing, from the communal tables to the Super Duper Nachos, from the backlit bar to the TVs that don't show 'television'. Here, love is found, rekindled or reaffirmed everyday.

315 E. Arenas Rd., Palm Springs
760-832-8497
blackbookbar.com

► **FINALISTS:**

Copley's on Palm Canyon

621 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-327-9555
copleyspalmsprings.com

Spencer's Restaurant

701 W. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs
760-327-3446
spencersrestaurant.com

BEST SEAFOOD



► **WINNER: Fisherman's Market & Grill**

A seafood market in the restaurant business, Fisherman's Market & Grill has created the standard for quality and freshness in the seafood restaurant business. Voted once again as Coachella Valley's top seafood restaurant, Fisherman's Market & Grill is dedicated to serving the absolute freshest fish, with the most unique recipes, while maintaining the highest standards that simply can't be beat. Louis Pagano thanks everyone, especially his staff, for keeping Fisherman's Market & Grill your No. 1 choice for outstanding seafood. To learn more, visit fishermans.com.

235 S. Indian Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-327-1766

► **FINALISTS:**

Spencer's Restaurant

701 W. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs
760-327-3446
spencersrestaurant.com

Kaiser Grille Palm Desert

74040 Hwy. 111, Palm Desert
760-779-9888
kaisergrillepalmdesert.com

BEST STEAKHOUSE

► **WINNER: Mr. Lyons Palm Springs**

Come taste the new classic at Mr. Lyons, where you'll experience a conscientious

modern update to steak, with a menu that puts local, small farms first. Family-owned and operated for over 70 years by David Lyons as Lyons English Grill, Mr. Lyons was reimaged by local chef, restaurateur and hotelier Tara Lazar in 2015 as the newest offering from the Foundation 10 family. Evoking the old Hollywood glamour that Palm Springs is famous for, you'll see the same attention to detail found at Cheeky's, Birba and Alcazar. With a black and white marble dining salon, wood, brass and luxurious velvet booths, Mr. Lyons offers a fine dining experience steeped in classic elegance. The menu is steak-centered with an endless choice of sides, and the tableside service — a hallmark of classic steakhouse dining — offers the kind of personalized experience you won't soon forget. For more information, visit mryonsp.com. 233 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs 760-327-1551

► **FINALISTS:**

LG's Prime Steakhouse

225 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-416-1779
lgsprimesteakhouse.com

The Steakhouse at Spa Resort Casino

401 E. Amado Rd., Palm Springs
888-999-1995
sparesortcasino.com/steakhouse

BEST SUSHI

► **WINNER: Okura Robata Grill & Sushi Bar**

Okura's menu spans a wide range of delectable options, from unique appetizers and classic Japanese sushi to its signature delicious Robata Grill entrees — including succulent Kobe steaks. Okura serves only the freshest selection of raw fish and seafood, delicately and skillfully prepared by our master sushi chefs. Learn more at okurasushi.com. 78370 Hwy. 111, Ste. 150, La Quinta 760-564-5820

► **FINALISTS:**

The Venue Sushi Bar & Sake Lounge

73111 El Paseo, Ste. 103,
Palm Desert 760-346-1500
thevenuepalmdesert.com

Kiyosaku

1555S S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-327-6601
kiyosakusushi.menutoeat.com

BEST VEGAN/VEGETARIAN

► **WINNER: Lulu California Bistro and Acqua California Bistro**

At Lulu California Bistro, talent, expertise and a passion for great food combine to produce a captivating dining experience. Acqua California Bistro features revamped and expanded dining areas, a remodeled outdoor patio and Acqua's new "River Room," a private dining experience like no other for private parties, corporate events and special occasions. Offering the same extensive and value-priced menu options as its sister restaurant Lulu California Bistro, you'll find menu options which are both varied and value-priced. Generous portions are prepared with fresh ingredients and a dash of innovation from award-winning chefs. Learn more about what Lulu's has to offer by visiting lulupalmsprings.com. 200 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs 760-327-5858

► **FINALISTS:**

Wildest Greens

72990 El Paseo, Ste. 3, Palm Desert
760-636-0441
wildestgreens.com

Spencer's Restaurant

701 W. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs
760-327-3446
spencersrestaurant.com

BEST WEEKEND BRUNCH



► **WINNER: Spencer's Restaurant**

Nestled at the base of the San Jacinto Mountains on the grounds of the Historic Palm Springs Tennis Club, Spencer's Restaurant is a popular Palm Springs tradition — offering culinary excellence, an award-winning wine list and a fresh approach to classic American cuisine. With its picturesque grounds, Spencer's ambiance is the perfect blend of stylish elegance and comfortable informality. Come experi-

ence perhaps the best alfresco dining experience in the desert. Enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner in an elegant dining room, temperature-controlled outdoor patio or the romantic private event space, the Bougainvillea Room. Don't forget Spencer's can also cater your events either on-site or off-site. For more information, visit spencersrestaurant.com. 701 W. Baristo Rd., Palm Springs 760-327-3446

► **FINALISTS:**

Lulu California Bistro

200 S. Palm Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-327-5858
lulupalmsprings.com

Jackalope Ranch

80400 Hwy. 111, Indio
760-342-1999
thejackaloperanch.com

**OUTDOORS & ADVENTURE
BEST HIKE**



► **WINNER: Araby Trail**

Araby Trail is a 4.1-mile moderately trafficked out and back trail located near Palm Springs. It features beautiful wild flowers and is rated as moderate. The trail offers a number of activity options and is best used from September until April. For more information, visit alltrails.com/trail/us/california/araby-trail. Palm Springs CA 760-862-9984 alltrails.com

► **FINALISTS:**

Indian Canyons

38520 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs
760-323-6018
indian-canyons.com

South Lykken

Palm Springs
alltrails.com

BEST PUBLIC GOLF COURSE

► **WINNER: Eagle Falls Golf Course**
Renowned architect Clive Clark has taken a parcel of our local desert and carved a masterpiece with elevations and water features not usually seen on a golf course open for public play. This 18-hole, 6,715 yard, par 72 challenge will test the low handicapper, but provide an enjoyable and fair test of golf for the average player. Learn more at eaglefallsgolf.com.
84245 Indio Springs Dr., Indio
760-238-5633

► **FINALISTS:**
Indian Canyons Golf Resort
1097 E. Murray Canyon Dr.,
Palm Springs 760-833-8700
indiancanyonsgolf.com

Indian Wells Golf Resort
44-500 Indian Wells Ln., Indian Wells
760-346-4653
indianwellsresort.com

BEST TENNIS COURT



► **WINNER: Indian Wells Tennis Garden**
The state-of-the-art facility opened in March 2000, showcasing the second largest tennis stadium in the world and a full-service year-round tennis club. Former No. 1 U.S. player, tournament chairman and owner of the BNP Paribas Open, Charlie Pasarell, together with his partner, former player and owner, Raymond Moore, formed PM Sports Management Company where they teamed with Mark McCormack's International Management Group to privately fund the dynamic development. Pasarell's vision was to create the best tennis facility at the dawning of a new century for everyone involved — professional and amateur players, spectators, sponsors and media. This is the standard by which all tennis facilities past, present, and future, will be judged. Learn more at iwtg.net.
78200 Miles Ave.,
Indian Wells
760-200-8400

► **FINALISTS:**
Palm Springs Tennis Club
701 W. Baristo Rd.,
Palm Springs
760-318-1716
palmspringstennisclub.info

LA QUINTA RESORT & CLUB
49499 Eisenhower Dr., La Quinta
760-564-4111
laquintaresort.com

TOURING BEST LOCAL LANDMARK

► **WINNER: The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens**
The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens has been a top attraction in the Palm Springs area for nearly 50 years. See numerous animals species or stroll through 50 spectacular botanical gardens featuring 1,400 plant species, and sneak a peek at an animal exam at the Tenny Wildlife Hospital and Conservation Center. As an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, The Living Desert ensures the highest standards of animal care, education and public service, and participates and supports conservation efforts at the Zoo and around the world. Learn more at livingdesert.org.
47900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert
760-346-5694

► **FINALISTS:**
Palm Springs Aerial Tramway
1 Tram Way, Palm Springs
888-515-8726
pstramway.com

Sunnylands
37977 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
760-202-2222
sunnylands.org

BEST PLACE TO BRING VISITING FRIENDS

► **WINNER: Desert X - Glenn Kaino "Hollow Earth"**
Hollow Earth is a sculpture made from glass and wood that creates the illusion of a tunnel descending deep into the Earth, housed in an abandoned shed. Once inside the darkened space, audience members become uneasy as they peer down a brightly lit and very deep-looking hole that drops into infinite darkness. Glenn Kaino's work is a contemplative gesture that explores the complicated and diverse history of tunnel making, from the secret tunnels

between Egypt and the Gaza Strip to the common childhood (and Orientalist) fantasy of digging a hole through the planet and ending up in China. Learn more at desertx.org/glenn-kaino.
Ave. 42, Indio
760-567-3284

► **FINALISTS:**
Blackbook Bar
315 E. Arenas Rd., Palm Springs
760-832-8497
blackbookbar.com

Brandini Toffee Factory Tour
42250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
760-200-1598
brandinitoffee.com

BEST PLACE TO TAKE THE KIDS



► **WINNER: The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens**
Rated one of the top zoos in the country, visit The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens and step through the new entrance then come face to face with leopards, cheetah, zebra, jaguar, Mexican wolf and more while exploring miles of nature and hiking trails. Try riding a camel or feed the giraffe and lorikeets. The zoo is open daily, except on Dec. 25, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. until May 31. During the hot summer months of June 1 through Sept. 30 the zoo closes at 1:30 p.m. For more information, visit livingdesert.org.
47900 Portola Ave., Palm Desert
760-346-5694

► **FINALISTS:**
Brandini Toffee Factory Tour
42250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
760-200-1598
brandinitoffee.com

Palm Springs Air Museum
745 N. Gene Autry Tr., Palm Springs
760-778-6262
palmspringairmuseum.org







FREDDIE MERCURY'S STORY ISN'T EXACT IN "BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY," BUT THE FILM AIMS TO BLEND TRUTH AND ART.

LIVES

THE TIME OF THEIR

WORDS BY **BRUCE FESSIER**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ALEX BAILEY**

You don't have to go to Ancestry.com to find the DNA of the Queen biopic, "Bohemian Rhapsody."

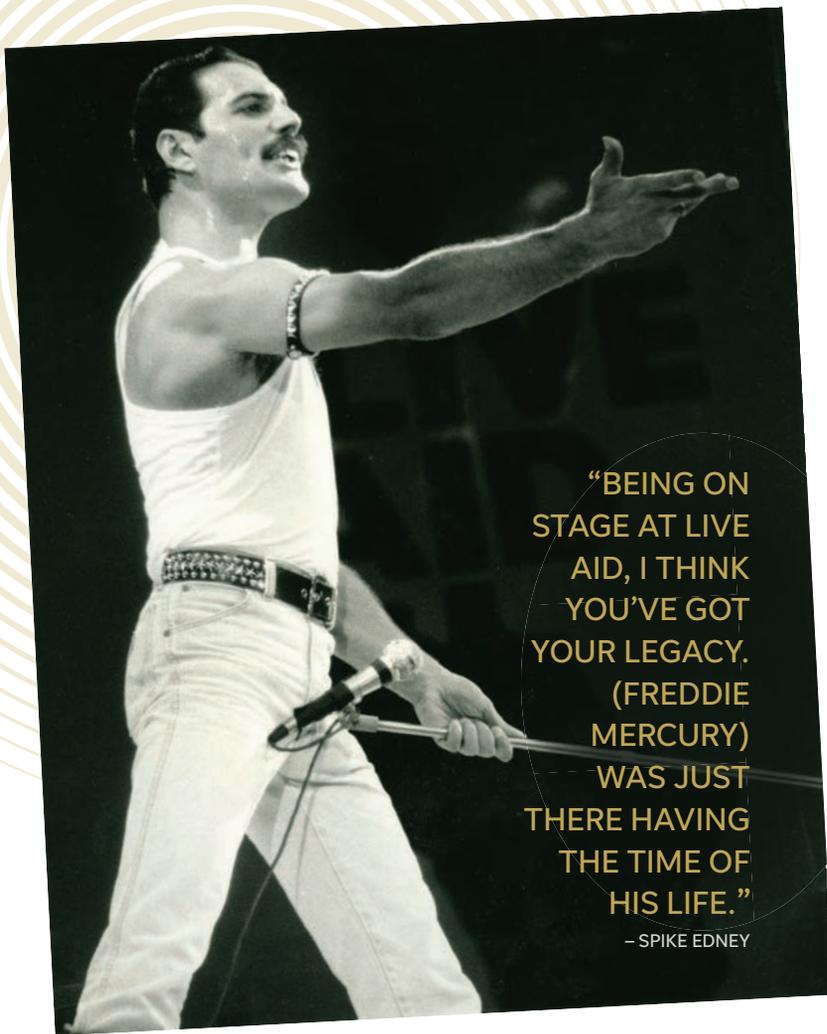
Clues to the roots of Rami Malek's astonishing performance as Freddie Mercury abound, like a scrapple of artifacts in an archaeological dig. Video clips of Queen provide a blueprint for their look, just as Mercury's personal lyrics offer insights into his character, the aggregation of the complex thought patterns swirling inside his head.

But the special effects artists who transferred Mercury's look to Malek and the screenwriter who created the frame for Malek's art also have trails for armchair detectives to follow to learn how cinema interfaced with reality.

Two-time Oscar-nominated screenwriter Anthony McCarten created the antecedent for "Bohemian Rhapsody's" stepping-stone narrative leading to a mighty crescendo in his Winston Churchill biopic, "Darkest Hour." The first 100 minutes of that film, starring Palm Springs-based Oscar winner Gary Oldman, built to one of the 20th century's greatest speeches: "We shall fight on the beaches; we shall fight on the landing grounds; we shall fight in the fields... we shall never surrender!"

"Bohemian Rhapsody" features similar cinematic architecture. Its first 100 minutes build to one of the 20th century's greatest concert sets – Queen's 20-minute performance at the 1985 Live Aid benefit at London's Wembley Stadium – and Malek gives it an Oldman-level swing for the fences, inspiring the Palm Springs International Film Festival to select him for a Breakthrough Performance Award at its Jan. 3 Film Awards Gala.

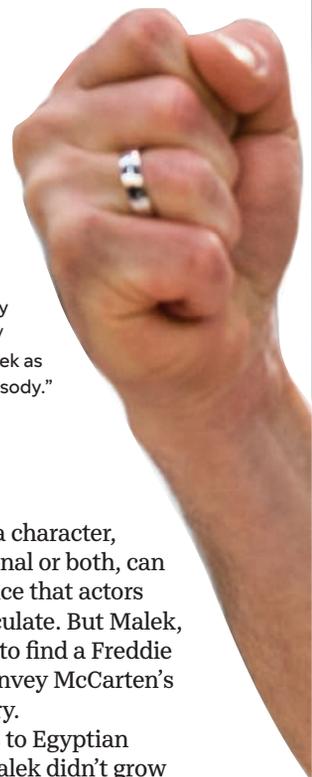
Coachella Valley friends who knew Mercury echo the praise critics have heaped upon Malek's performance.



“BEING ON
STAGE AT LIVE
AID, I THINK
YOU’VE GOT
YOUR LEGACY.
(FREDDIE
MERCURY)
WAS JUST
THERE HAVING
THE TIME OF
HIS LIFE.”

— SPIKE EDNEY

Left: Freddie Mercury with Queen on stage at Live Aid on July 13, 1985 at Wembley Stadium, London. AP PHOTO/ MARK ALLAN; right: Rami Malek as Mercury in “Bohemian Rhapsody.”



“I thought he had come back,” said Lorna Luft, who hung out with Queen after moving to London in the 1960s. “At one point, my husband and I grabbed each other, and I said, ‘This is really weird,’ because I think he embodied him. I don’t think he was doing an impersonation. He was brilliant.”

“His performance really draws you in,” said Spike Edney, Queen’s music director who played keyboards with the band at Live Aid. “I think it’s quite a difficult task for him to try to play a character as complex as Freddie Mercury. But he does it really well.”

Another McCarten film that sent its star through the Palm Springs film fest on his way to an Oscar, “The Theory of Everything” with Eddie Redmayne, has more threads tying it to “Bohemian Rhapsody” than even “Darkest Hour.” Malek and Redmayne discovered that during a conversation in November at Hollywood’s Governor Awards.

Malek, who broke through to television audiences with his Emmy Award-winning portrait of the disturbed genius Elliot Alderson in “Mr. Robot,” drew inspiration from Redmayne’s portrait of the quadriplegic genius, Stephen Hawking, in “The Theory of Everything.”

Malek used Redmayne’s movement coach, Polly Bennett, to make him walk and prance like Mercury. He used his hair and makeup designer, Jan Sewell, to give him a more aquiline nose. He used Redmayne’s special effects teeth specialist, Chris Lyons, to give him oversized upper teeth. He also dove deep into Mercury’s path to AIDS just as Redmayne studied Hawking’s journey into the depths of ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s Disease.

“He’s who I got the initial idea for this from,” Malek said in an open, revealing telephone interview from New York. “I kind of said, ‘Give me the Eddie

Redmayne team.’”

Finding the soul of a character, whether it’s real, fictional or both, can be a mystical experience that actors don’t often like to articulate. But Malek, 37, shared his journey to find a Freddie Mercury that could convey McCarten’s partially made-up story.

Born in Los Angeles to Egyptian immigrant parents, Malek didn’t grow up idolizing Queen like many who recognized the historical significance of the band.

Queen attracted record-sized audiences in the 1980s, including several of over 100,000 people. Their 1981 “Game” Tour of South America included a concert in Buenos Aires that drew 300,000 people, the largest single-concert crowd in Argentine history.

Queen is the only quartet with all four members in the Songwriters Hall of Fame, and they each have hits justifying such recognition. Drummer Roger Taylor wrote or co-wrote “Radio Ga Ga” and “These Are the Days of Our Lives.” Guitarist Brian May composed “We Will Rock You” and “Tie Your Mother Down.” Bassist John Deacon (who retired after Mercury’s death in 1991) composed “Another One Bites the Dust” and “You’re My Best Friend.”

Mercury was the band’s most prolific songwriter, but eventually, they all shared songwriting credits. Their hit with David Bowie, “Under Pressure,” evolved from a jam session.



E



But Queen has had roller coaster levels of success. They hit it big in the early '70s with their eclectic, guitar-driven, multi-layered instrumentals and vocal harmonies. They regained popularity in the '80s, after a short absence from the American charts, with a more electronic sound. They were rediscovered after Mercury's death with the inclusion of the operatic hit, "Bohemian Rhapsody," in the 1992 film, "Wayne's World."

For the past six years, Queen has been enchanting new audiences with Adam Lambert singing and paying tribute to Mercury.

"I have a best friend who named his child Freddie Mercury," Malek said. "He did that about two years prior to me getting the role. So, we grew up listening to Queen and Freddie Mercury. I didn't have the extensive knowledge that I do now. ... I'm a fanatic now."

Malek didn't initially see himself as Mercury. He doesn't sing, so all the vocals would have to be dubbed. But they're both descended from ancient cultures.

Mercury's family are Parsees (followers of the 6th century BCE Persian prophet Zoroaster) who migrated to Zanzibar in the Indian

Ocean before settling in England.

Producer Denis O'Sullivan saw Malek portray the detached, socially-anxious Elliot Alderson in "Mr. Robot" and told fellow producer Graham King, "I think we've found our Freddie." Malek met them in Los Angeles, on a break from "Mr. Robot," and King said Malek had Mercury's DNA.

"I didn't really realize in the moment, but they were pretty much offering me this role," Malek said. "I wished them luck at the end of the meeting – with whoever they saw fit to play His Majesty – and they said, 'No, this is yours if you want it.'"



From left to right: Gwilym Lee (Brian May), Ben Hardy (Roger Taylor), Rami Malek (Freddie Mercury), and Joe Mazzello (John Deacon) star in Twentieth Century Fox's "Bohemian Rhapsody."
COURTESY TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

FILM FEST IN A NUTSHELL

What: The 30th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival, presented by the nonprofit Palm Springs International Film Society with a title sponsorship by the city of Palm Springs. Filmgoers vote for audience favorite awards. A jury award is presented by the FIPRESCI international critics organization. The festival is known for screening all or most of the Best Foreign Language Oscar nominees.

When: Jan. 3-14. The Film Awards Gala is Jan. 3.

Where: Venues throughout the cities of Palm Springs and Cathedral City. The gala is held at the Palm Springs Convention Center, 277 N. Avenida Caballeros, Palm Springs.

Tickets: All-access passes with special screening privileges \$2,500-\$3,000. Platinum and five-day passes sold out. Six-packs voucher \$69, individual \$13 tickets, opening and closing night tickets available Dec. 26 or Dec. 23 for Film Society members at 777 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs and locations to be announced.

Information: psfilmfest.org or call (760) 322-2930 or (800) 898-7256

STARTING THE JOURNEY

Malek had to make an audition tape for studio executives to secure the part, but, the next thing he did on his path to becoming Mercury was to watch "thousands of hours of Queen tapes.

"I went online and ordered every book, all these albums and watched all the archival footage I could get my hands on," he said. "I didn't really know where to start. I just knew I had to absorb as much as I could in a very finite amount of time."

What surprised him most was the wit and charm Mercury exuded in interviews. He found a slyness

or mischief behind his eyes that he emulated to help convey Mercury's essence. But there were also physical mannerisms that Bennett, a movement practitioner at the Royal Shakespeare Company, helped him capture.

Bennett told Malek how to move like Mercury by giving him instructions, like, "You have a bubble bath streaming down your back. Now giraffe it. Now, serve me some spaghetti."

"I'm not a numbers person, so 5-6-7-8 is not something that was very helpful to me," Malek said. "So, if she tells me to stand like a giraffe, it's odd, but it makes sense. We would look at interviews and

Actor Rami Malek as
Freddie Mercury in
"Bohemian Rhapsody"



“IN THOSE
MOMENTS
IS A BEAUTY
OF WHERE
I, AS RAMI,
GET TO
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AM HAVING
THE TIME
OF MY LIFE.”

— RAMI MALEK



think about what he’s talking about and his physicality and get behind the psychology of that as well.”

The film’s most important scene is the re-created Live Aid set. Director Bryan Singer and his crew rebuilt the demolished Wembley Stadium to scale on an old airstrip north of London. They sought Queen fans to react to the actors’ performance and hired more than 3,000 as extras. The filmmakers watched video of Queen’s Live Aid set frame-by-frame to ensure the film was faithful to the original performance, “beat-by-beat, gesture for gesture.”

But the production began by shooting the Live Aid scenes first. So, by day one, Malek and his bandmates had to act like they had the chemistry of a group that had been like a family for almost 15 years. Taylor and May also were scheduled to watch the dailies, as the film’s executive music producers, to see if they were conveying the music’s feel.

“I think we all freaked out at the thought of that,” Malek said, “but, what Polly had us do before we would work on any performance, we would kind of touch in, which means we would look each other in the eye and physically huddle with one another and make sure we had eye contact and physical contact. That might come off a bit silly, but, I’ll tell you, when we went out to perform Live Aid in one long take on the fifth or sixth day – the entire concert, start to finish with five or six different cameras – you’re touching in there. You need each other to be extremely present. You’re depending on one another in every single moment. You wouldn’t

believe how tight we are, the boys and I and the entire cast. Still.”

Edney said Queen prepared for that set as seriously as they approached every show. The script built drama in getting Queen added to the Live Aid bill, but Edney recalled in 2016 that he was the one who delivered the message that promoter Bob Geldof wanted Queen to play his benefit. Edney played trombone in Geldof’s Boomtown Rats before joining Queen on keyboards, so he was a natural bridge.

Geldof had heard through a grapevine, Edney added in November, that Taylor was somewhat miffed at not being asked to join Geldof’s charity supergroup, Band Aid. Their recording of “Do They Know It’s Christmas,” which raised funds to combat the famine in Ethiopia, became an historic hit. So, Geldof asked Edney to gauge the band’s willingness to play Live Aid.

“He said, ‘I’m not going to ask them until I know they’ll say yes,’ which I think was understandable,” Edney said. “So, I got on the plane to New Zealand (to start a tour) and, if my memory serves, we went out to dinner and I broached the subject. I think it was John Deacon who said, ‘Why doesn’t he ask us himself?’ I said, ‘He wants me to find out what your answer’s going to be and if you’re really interested you’ll receive the question. If you’re not really interested, he won’t bother asking you.’ They wanted to know more, so that’s when Geldof got in touch with (Queen’s manager) Jim Beach.”

The band members had their quarrels in the ’80s, but the July 13 Live Aid

appearance wasn't a comeback. They had completed their Far East tour just two months earlier. Their previous break came three months after playing before 300,000 people a night at the first Rock in Rio festival in Brazil. Mercury had just recorded a solo album, as noted in the film, but Taylor and May had recorded solo projects before him.

The band's short absence from the American charts, Edney said, was caused by MTV's refusal to play a video from Queen's "The Works" LP. The band dressed as women in the "I Want To Break Free" video and MTV objected to what it called "cross-dressing."

But Edney said the video, which was re-enacted in the film, made no sexual intimations.

"They were dressed as characters from English soap operas," he said. "They were instantly recognizable to the English audience and totally regarded as tongue-in-cheek. We got the joke, but Americans didn't because they had no references. So MTV, in this weird kind of right wing reaction, said, 'We can't see men in female attire on TV.' They wouldn't show it. On that album,

'Radio Ga Ga' and 'I Want To Break Free' were massive hits in the rest of the world, but not in America. So, that signified a hiatus of their previously upward career."

Every band at Live Aid was given 20 minutes to perform and Edney recalled spending two or three days figuring out what to play and how to fit songs into medleys. They opened with the first part of their usual closing number, "Bohemian Rhapsody," featuring the intriguing lyrics:

"Too late, my time has come/ Sends shivers down my spine, body's aching all the time/ Goodbye, everybody, I've got to go/ Gotta leave you all behind and face the truth."

The set really kicked into gear when they played the next song, "Radio Ga Ga," Edney said. The English audience knew the video and emulated it.

"When they got to the chorus, they all copied the video of doing the hand-clap in the air," Edney said. "When you go on stage at something like that, you don't know how much of the audience knows your (material). There are so many artists out there, and the event itself was

attracting people who just wanted to be there. So, you don't know how many of those people are actually there for you. But, when I saw the hands go up, I thought, 'OK, this is going to be good.'"

Edney, who also plays guitar, spent most of the set behind Deacon's amplifier. He came downstage to play Mercury's grand piano on "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," but, it wasn't captured on video. He'd like to know if *any* cameras picked him up at Live Aid, but he's comfortable not appearing in the film because, he said, "It wouldn't necessarily reflect the visual of that day."

The band played only the first verse and chorus of "We Will Rock You" before finishing with "We Are the Champions," featuring its redemptive lyrics, "*And bad mistakes, I've made a few/ I've had my share of sand kicked in my face/ But I've come through.*"

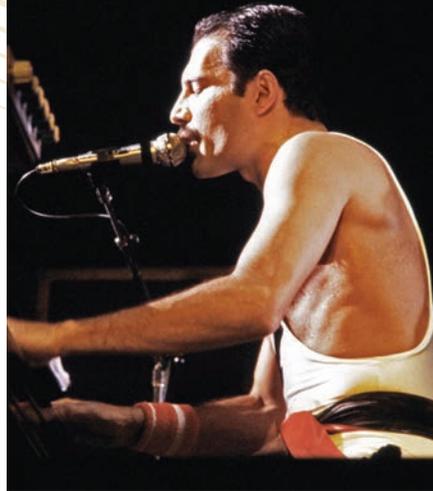
Mercury strutted across stage with the energy of the live fans and a worldwide audience propping him up. Any issues of ethnic or sexual identity were overwhelmed by adrenaline.

"There was no doubt in his mind about who he was," Edney said. "Being



From left to right:
Joe Mazzello (John Deacon), Ben Hardy (Roger Taylor), Rami Malek (Freddie Mercury), and Gwilym Lee (Brian May) in "Bohemian Rhapsody"

Freddie Mercury during a concert in Paris JEAN-CLAUDE COUTAUSSE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



on stage at Live Aid, I think you've got your legacy. He was just there having the time of his life and having fun with the audience that was responding to him. I think it was no deeper than that."

FINDING TRUTH IN ART

But Malek had to tell McCarten's story, a narrative driven by Mercury's history with AIDS. Rock chroniclers have said the first indication that Mercury knew he had AIDS came in 1987. Edney said he and his Queen bandmates had no idea that Mercury knew he had it in 1985. But Malek had a story to convey. He drew from Mercury's lyrics to keep his performance honest.

"I can never say what Freddie Mercury was thinking in the moment," Malek said. "Obviously, the subject of AIDS was very present at that time. Freddie said he was going to keep living his life the way he had been living it, and that was his choice. But, there easily could have been a moment down the road where he was playing another concert and did know. No one can speak to that. But, we had a finite amount of time to capture so much of his life. We didn't want to shy away from anything. We wanted to celebrate every aspect of this human being. When I sat down and got to play *'It's been no bed of roses'* from *'We Are the Champions,'* *'it's been no pleasure cruise,'* those are lyrics that exemplify who this man is and everything he went through, whether it was the early trials and tribulations and conflicted identity or having to deal with or come to terms and understand his sexual identity, which was obviously extremely stigmatized at the time, especially by his family's religious faith.

"*'We Are the Champions'* for me, at the end of that concert, (there are) things we can all relate to in their lyrics. But, when you really sit with them and think about the people who wrote and performed these songs, and for me especially Freddie, you can imbue them with such a deep level of pain and understanding, and ultimately a sense of triumph over tragedy."

Malek had to get inside Mercury's

head and react to the crowd of extras who were enjoying his performance to make it feel real. But he couldn't get swept up in the moment because he also had to remember Mercury's every move for the five or six cameras on him to make it look authentic. He had to find the balance between replication and art.

"That was difficult," he said. "At one point, I had to halt all of my activity in terms of the work I had been doing (to develop his character) and almost focus entirely on Live Aid. And I didn't want to do that because I didn't want to neglect all the other facets of the man. I wanted to always make sure I captured what he was feeling in the moment, according to the story – what I thought Freddie, in our version of the two hours you get to spend with him and the band, where he was. There are aspects where you want to pay homage as perfectly as you can to re-create that time on the Live Aid stage. But there are also moments where you have to play a certain fear for going out there for the period where he did have a bit of fragility and had to regain a certain confidence."

Malek found inspiration in Mercury's approach to his performance. All the videos he watched, all the literature he read and all the people he talked to told him Mercury was a fearless performer, even if he had a sense of fragility in his real life. Malek conjured up the courage to give in totally to his character, to leave it all out there. But that also left him in a fragile state when the cameras stopped rolling.

"When you go and look at his songs, you really get a sense of who he was and why he was spilling his soul so passionately," Malek said. "So, what I've learned from Freddie Mercury is, when he sings a song, it's something that means a lot to him. But, you have to take risks. So, I went out every day and tried to take as many risks as possible.

"There was a moment early in the film, Tom Hollander (who plays Queen's manager) came up to me in between takes and said, 'Are you always this loud?' I went to my dear friend Joe Mazzello (portraying Deacon), who I worked with on *'The Pacific.'* I can confide in him. I said, 'Have I screwed this up? Am I over the top? Does this feel ridiculous? Does this feel like some hokey interpretation?' And he was like, 'No, man, just stick to your gut. You got this.'

"That was something I needed to propel myself forward, and by the end, I remember doing *'Another One Bites the Dust'* and Tom being there. It had been quite a while since we had worked together, and he said something about, 'Are you sure he never had a son?' Something to that degree. It came full circle. You've got to take these risks in order to have any chance of being successful."

Malek conveys the sense in the Live Aid scenes that Mercury knew his time had come; that he had AIDS. But he also knew from his research that Mercury felt a freedom on stage that, "no matter what has happened to him, no matter what is going on, he can be so present and stand up in the most eloquent way, and move in ways a body has never been able to replicate, and have the time of his life."

Malek got to that point in the climactic performance scene. He knew it intuitively.

"There were moments for me when I felt that something was operating on some levels I never felt before," Malek said. "I can't describe that feeling and I don't want to attempt to because, in those moments is a beauty of where I, as Rami, get to feel like I am having the time of my life." 🌱

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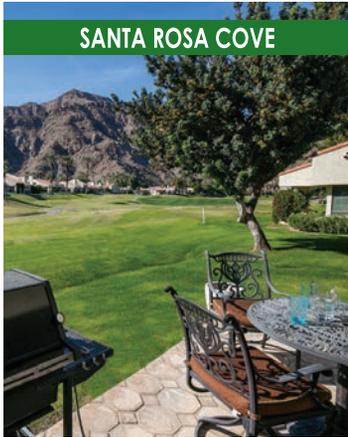


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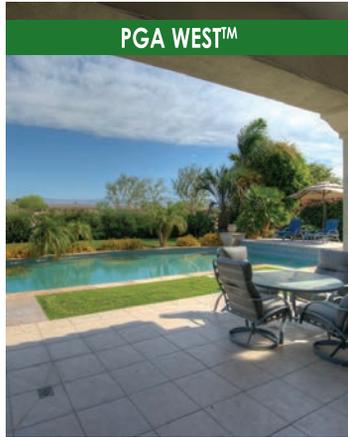
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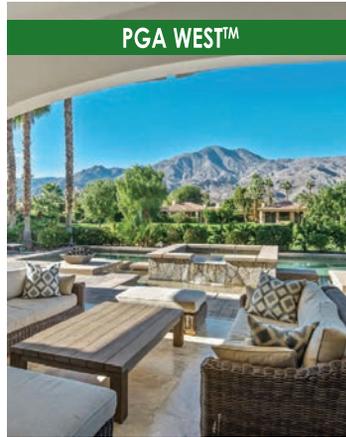
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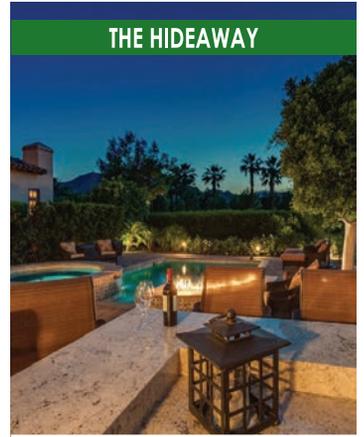
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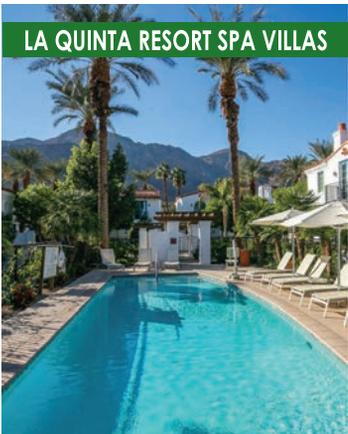
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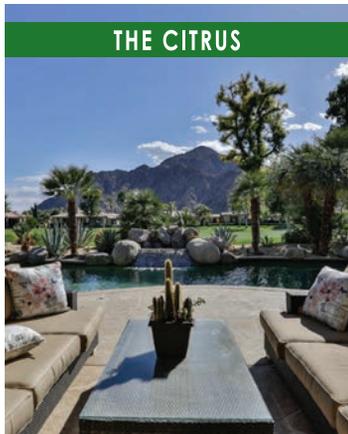
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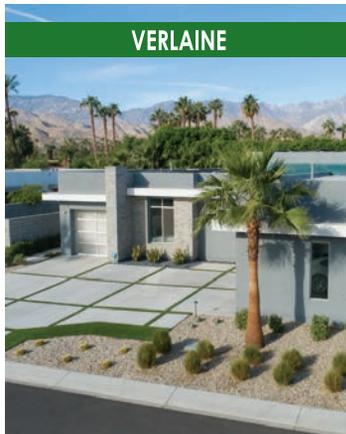
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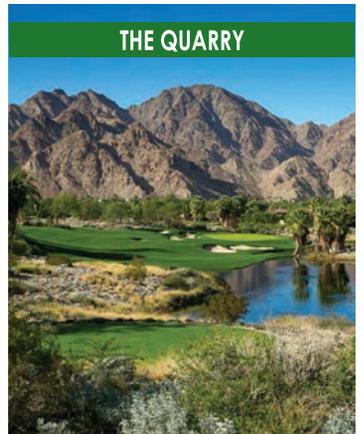
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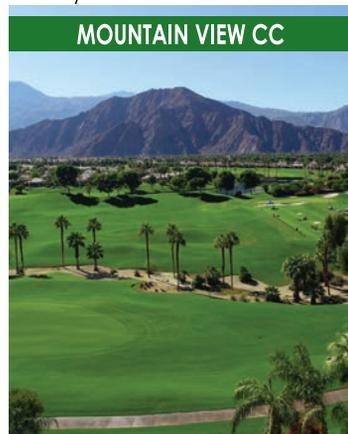
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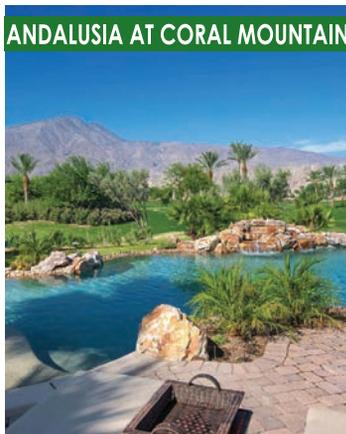
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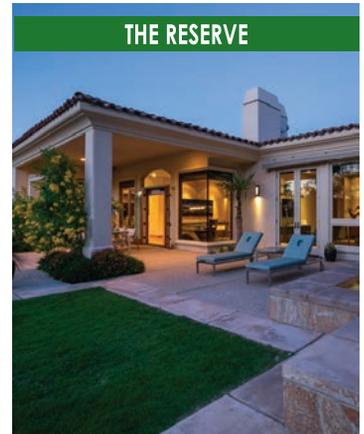
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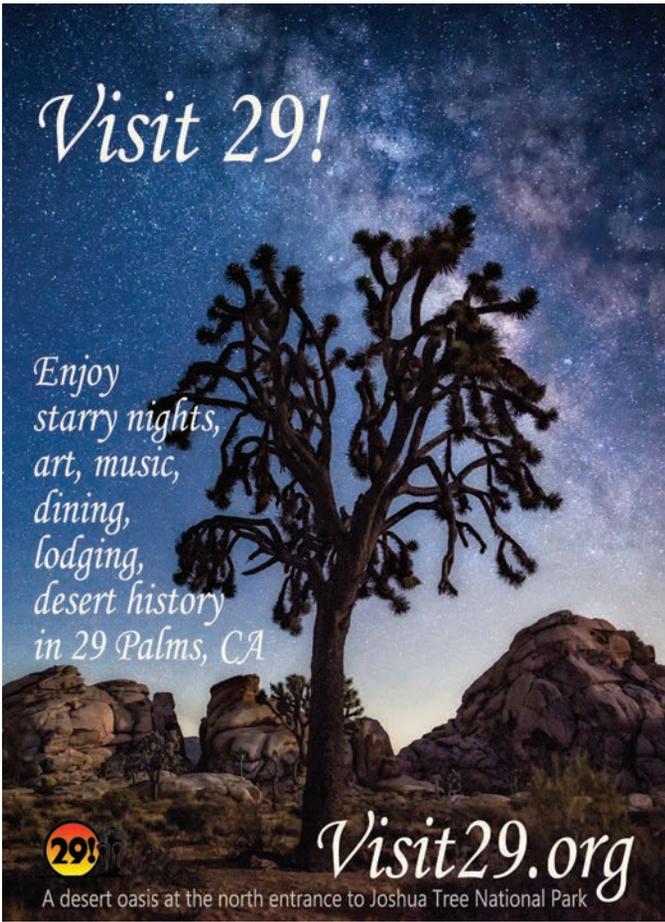
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Final thoughts

One artist's take on the ways in which we seek - and find - beauty in the desert.



ABBY MUSIAL

WORDS BY **KERRY S. CAMPBELL**

What the high desert holds can be anything
Abandoned mines of the recesses of your mind
Your eccentric self – speaking to red rocks in the canyons
Unexploded ordinances
A supersonic jet – clear blue sky
The Joshua tree and its bearded limbs
Twisted and puncturing the sound wave that follows
The pinyon pine – scraggly
Old guardians of the deep dark night
Where the satellites start to glide across a swath of sky – like
Secret sentinels then suddenly stop and
Disappear into the background of stars
The Milky Way shedding the blood of centuries of
War from beneath itself: a hallowing
Where the mystery of magic is so profound you can
Feel its weight all around you
Like an unknown vortex – a journey to another place in space
Possibly dimension – an alternate universe
The path you didn't choose that continues on its
Own trajectory through time
When the echo of the sound of your feet
Beneath you is all you hear

Only to find when you stop. the still stark silence of the
Wind whispering through the canyon.
The singular rusted mountains
Undulating across the horizon
Where you swear you see the ghosts of
Dinosaurs roaming what once were shallow seas
As time falls away and fades into the
Sun which is now lowering in the sky
The witching time in the desert has begun
Where the spirits begin to wander the land
The long open highways
Laid out in front of you break away like myriad
Endless possibilities🌱

Kerry S. Campbell is a published poet and visual artist. She spent her teenage years growing up in the middle of nowhere in the Mojave Desert. She visits the desert frequently, like an old friend. She combines poetry with her artworks at kerrycampbellartist.com. Kerry is represented by Barba Contemporary Art Gallery in Palm Springs and by Legend Nano Gallery in Oceanside, Cali., and Santa Fe, N.M. This piece originally appeared on her blog.

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