

TRAVEL WEEKEND

Desert Style

Revel in the "Mad Men" world of sleek lines, sophisticated decor, and fine architecture during Modernism Week in Palm Springs.

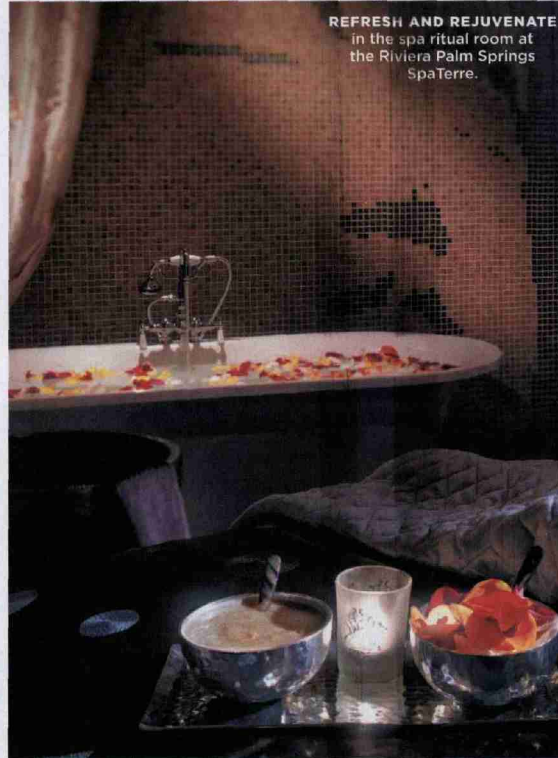
By JEANNE BOYER

Take a trip to the middle of the last century during Palm Springs Modernism Week Feb. 16 to 26. The event has become so popular that it now extends more than a week, to accommodate visitors from around the world who come to admire marvels of mid-century modern architecture.

You can tour mid-century homes, shop for mid-century furnishings, and sleep in a mid-century hotel. Gaze at Airstream trailers and cars with fins, while imagining yourself in a "Mad Men" world of sleek lines and sophisticated design.

Architects like Paul Williams, Albert Frey and John Lautner are among those who created homes for Palm Springs stars and business owners. You can attend tours and cocktail parties in their designs, including a party at the round Elrod House, a Lautner home seen in the movie *Diamonds are Forever*. Or raise your glass at a retro martini party Feb. 24 at the Gull Wing House, designed by Val Powellson for Ester and Leo Marantz. Leo invented the Tastee Freez soft serve ice cream machine. The home is now owned by Jazzercise CEO Judi Sheppard Missett, and the event benefits the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation.

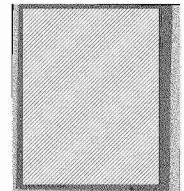
The hot tour ticket is Sunnylands, the famed estate of fabulously wealthy Walter and Leonore Annenberg, who collected art when they weren't playing golf, hosting parties, and donating to worthy causes. If you can't make it during Modernism Week, a limited number of



public tour tickets for the 25,000-square-foot home will be available beginning in March. Visit sunnylands.org to reserve tickets. Free tours of the visitors center and desert garden are also available. Distinctive pink walls surround the 200 acres where the Annenbergs entertained Hollywood royalty and the British royal family in 22 lovely guest rooms surrounded by 12 lakes and a private golf course.

You can stay in hotels designed by mid-century notables, like the Hotel Lautner in Desert Hot Springs—once a private home designed by Lautner, now an inn with four elegant units and luxurious amenities. In Palm Springs, The Movie Colony Hotel was designed by Albert Frey, and serves Dean Martinis by the pool. The Orbit In hotel serves "orbitinis." You can also check out the Ace Hotel and Horizon Hotel for a mid-century vibe.

Shop for your own retro look in the Palm Springs Design District, where numerous shops sell authentic mid-century modern furniture or reproductions. You'll note orange is a frequently-used Palm Springs color, as part of the mid-century trend, and because it was a favorite of a couple of trendsetters, Leonore Annenberg and her friend Frank Sinatra, according to local lore.



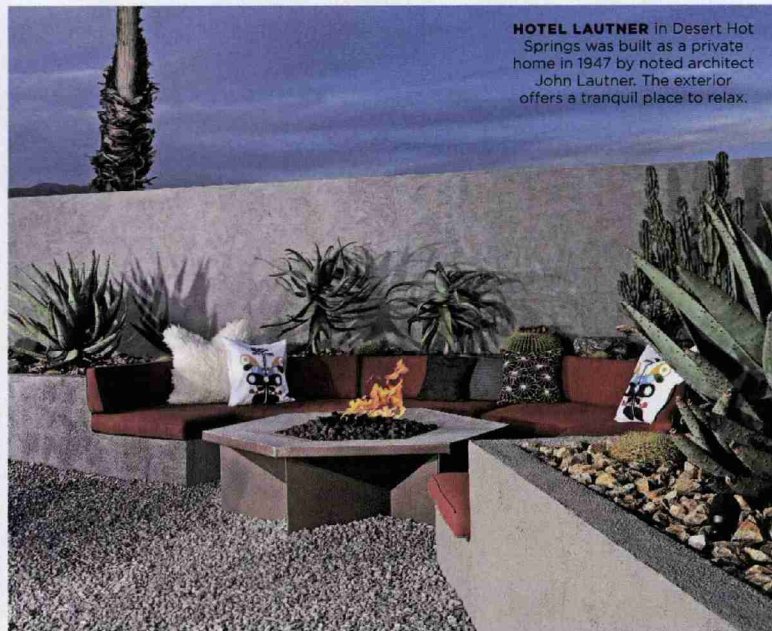
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Sinatra frequented the Riviera, a classic Palm Springs hotel featuring Circa 59 cuisine and a huge pool area.

This month the Riviera features an "On the Rocks" break-up special where you can have your own reserved cabana by the pool, a cooking lesson at Circa 59, detox treatment at SpaTerre, a hike at Indian Canyons, and your personal "break-up butler" attendant fetching you treats by the pool.

As a design accent and recreation spot, the swimming pool is essential to the desert entertaining lifestyle.

An entire exhibit of swimming pool photography is at the Palm Springs Art Museum. "Backyard Oasis: The Swimming Pool in Southern California Photography 1945-1982" runs through May 27. See Marilyn Monroe making a splash, and Rock Hudson making waves in pools that look very tempting indeed. Photos by Diane



HOTEL LAUTNER in Desert Hot Springs was built as a private home in 1947 by noted architect John Lautner. The exterior offers a tranquil place to relax.

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Arbus, Ruth Bernhard, David Hockney, Kenda North, Herb Ritts, Lawrence Schiller and more are on display as well as movie screens showing film clips of William Holden in *Sunset Boulevard* and Burt Lancaster in *The Swimmer*. The museum also has the Pink Martini Gala Feb. 4, featuring the group Pink Martini, dinner and dancing. For details, see psmuseum.org

For more entertainment, check out local theaters and casinos.

At the McCallum Theatre in Palm Desert, you can see stars like Judy Collins, Kathy Griffin, Pia Zadora, Ben Vereen, Lorrie Morgan and Pam Tillis in coming weeks. Area casinos have gambling, dining, and performers like Agua Caliente's Jeff Dunham Feb. 4, Johnny Mathis Feb. 11, and Melissa Manchester Feb. 25 in Rancho Mirage. At Indio's Fantasy Springs, Paul Anka, Willie Nelson, Peter Frampton, Frankie Valli



AN INTERIOR VIEW of the Hotel Lautner in Desert Hot Springs.

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and the Four Seasons, and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra visit in March. At Spotlight 29 in Coachella, you can see the Oak Ridge Boys Feb. 11, America Feb. 25, and Randy Travis March 3.

Now in its 21st season, The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies celebrates fun-in-the-sun and perpetual summer vacation with an all-new show entitled Hot! Hot! Hot! This Broadway-caliber production features the music, dance and comedy of Mid-Century America, and is performed by a cast who range in age from 58 to 82 years "young." Production numbers featuring the Follies' Legendary Line of Long-Legged Lovelies and Follies Gentlemen are presented at the historic Plaza Theatre in downtown Palm Springs. Guest stars this season include Maureen McGovern and The Diamonds, and—back by popular demand—ventriloquist Brad Cummings and his prehistoric

sidekick "Rex," the dinosaur. For tickets, visit www.psfollies.com or phone (760) 327-0225.

For outdoor adventures, take the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway 8,500 feet up Mt. San Jacinto, frequently featuring snow this time of year (be sure to take warm clothes, even if it's 70 degrees down below). Or go horseback riding and hiking in the scenic Indian Canyons area outside of Palm Springs, often used as a movie set itself. At The Living Desert zoo and botanical garden in Palm Desert, you can see wildlife in a beautiful outdoor setting.

Another place to see desert plants is the Moorten Botanical Garden in Palm Springs, once home to Patricia and Chester "Cactus Slim" Moorten. She was a biologist, he was a former Keystone Kop; together they designed and installed landscapes for Frank Sinatra and consulted with Walt Disney to

help design Frontierland at Disneyland. Their garden has 3,000 or so desert plants and cacti.

Biking is a popular pastime in the desert, and the Tour de Palm Springs is Feb. 10 and 11.

Tennis and golf are major desert sports, with plenty of courts and courses available. BNP Paribas Tennis Tournament March 5 to 8 in Indian Wells features top professional players. The Frank Sinatra Starkey Hearing celebrity invitational golf tournament is March 1 to 3 at Fantasy Springs Resort and Casino. The Dinah Shore women's golf classic is now known as the Kraft Nabisco tournament, March 29 to April 1 at Mission Hills in Rancho Mirage, but the name "Dinah Shore" remains as a reference to the female party scene that takes place.

For details on events, lodging and dining, see visitpalm Springs.com.