

CALIFORNIA'S COACHELLA VALLEY

VISION

2013-14

PALM SPRINGS
Like no place else



COACHELLA VALLEY
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
GREATER PALM SPRINGS
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CLIMATE FOR
SUCCESS

PALM SPRINGS

75 YEARS OF LIKE NO PLACE ELSE! THE DESERT'S MOST LEGENDARY RESORT PLAYGROUND IS AGAIN ULTRA-COOL!



Mayor Steve Pougnet greets President Obama at Palm Springs International Airport.

2013 marks the 75th anniversary of the city of Palm Springs — and it has been another spectacular year to remember for Southern California's most legendary resort playground! Once a haven to Hollywood mega-stars like Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Liberace, Elvis Presley and Lucille Ball, Palm Springs has experienced a historic transformation over the past several years — again becoming "ultra-cool!"

Thanks to the City's transformative Downtown Revitalization Plan, a host of innovative community and economic development projects, incentive programs, multi-million dollar hotel renovations and original special events and tourist attractions, the City has renewed itself as the hippest and most happening destination in Southern California for all generations of residents and visitors.

The most exciting project, the redevelopment of Desert Fashion Plaza, began in earnest and the Downtown Revitalization Plan is now in full swing, with plans for the opening of a sleek 190-room Kimpton Hotel in the near future. The new hotel will feature a magnificent roof-top pool, bar and signature restaurant along with meeting space — all wrapped in the City's iconic mid-century modern architecture and surrounded by gorgeous mountain vistas. In addition, the City is working with Wessman Development to secure quality retail tenants for a dramatic new outdoor boutique shopping and dining complex in the heart of downtown.

JAY CALDERON/DESERT SUN



Left: The Palomar, a Kimpton Hotel. Below left to right: Demolition of the old Desert Fashion Plaza. The Hard Rock Hotel under construction.



“After years of hard work by our City Council, staff and the developer, it is truly amazing to see real progress moving forward on a project that is so important to the economic success of Palm Springs and the entire Coachella Valley,” says Mayor Steve Pougnet, who notes that once the project is completed it will be transformational for our region and a tremendous economic driver.

“Everyone is buzzing with excitement,” says Pougnet.

Something else everyone is buzzing about is a new events venue, across from the Palm Springs Art Museum. This is expected to be the home of “Tachevah,” a hugely successful new music festival, created by Goldenvoice, the producer of the world famous Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. Last year more than 6,000 music lovers attended the inaugural event in downtown Palm Springs — and next year’s event is expected to be even bigger, according to Aftab Dada, Chairman of P.S. Resorts. P.S. Resorts,

the City of Palm Springs, local community leader Harold Matzner and *The Desert Sun* newspaper, are the lead sponsors of the event.

“The incredible success of Tachevah proves that there is a huge appetite for even more special events in Palm Springs — and we look forward to partnering to bring even more tremendous music talent to the city,” Dada says.

Beyond the Downtown Revitalization Plan, a host of other exciting improvement projects are currently under way in Palm Springs. From street paving to park improvements, residents and visitors can expect to see a plethora of transformational projects breaking ground.

“It’s a great time to live and work in the city of Palm Springs,” Pougnet says.

Another exciting development in Palm Springs is the 26-foot tall sculpture of Marilyn Monroe, sponsored by P.S. Resorts, a consortium of Palm Springs hospitality leaders. “Forever Marilyn” continues to be a huge hit with both residents and tourists,

according to Mary Jo Ginther, Director of the Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism.

“Marilyn has turned into a uniquely original special attraction that has truly put Palm Springs on the international stage,” Ginther says. “Everyone loves her and she’s been a tremendous tourism booster for our downtown.”

In fact, visit downtown Palm Springs and you’ll see residents and international visitors from all walks of life enjoying the town’s cool village vibe and eclectic shops, galleries, and dining destinations. Palm Springs is prominently featured in popular sitcoms, reality television and travel shows, fashionable magazines, and movies. Most recently, Academy-Award winning director Steven Soderbergh filmed part of the Emmy nominated HBO movie *Behind the Candelabra*, starring Michael Douglas as Liberace in August of 2012.

Not surprisingly, film and television producers from around the world flock to Palm Springs to shoot their productions — and with that in mind, the City Council

PALM SPRINGS STATS

MAYOR Steve Pougnet **MAYOR PRO TEM** Chris Mills **COUNCIL MEMBERS** Ginny Foat, Rick Hutcheson, Paul Lewin
YEAR INCORPORATED 1938 **POPULATION** 45,712 **AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME** \$75,058
WEBSITE www.palmspringsca.gov



The new 32-room Arrive Hotel.

recently approved a new “Film Friendly” Incentive Program. The program provides a grant of up to \$5,000 for lodging, rentals, food and beverage and location assistance. Additionally, the Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism has developed a new “virtual film office” located at PSFilmFriendly.com, that assists locations managers and filmmakers finding the perfect spot for their production while providing them with important introductions to local tourism partners.

“The City of Palm Springs wants the world to know that we are film friendly and ready to roll out the red carpet,” says Ginther.

Incorporated in 1938, Palm Springs is now most famous for being home to a variety of unique tourism attractions that include the breathtaking Indian Canyons, the magnificent Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the renowned Palm Springs Art Museum, The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies and several hugely successful special events — including Palm Springs VillageFest, a popular weekly street fair held every Thursday night along Palm Canyon Drive, the spectacular Festival of Lights Holiday Parade, Palm Springs Modernism Week and the world-famous Palm Springs International Film Festival.

Consistently voted the Coachella Valley’s most popular special event, the film festival, founded 25 years ago by then-Mayor Sonny Bono, draws in thousands of visitors every January. It features a star-studded Awards Gala and has honored some of the best actors, writers and directors in the world — including George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Colin Firth, Clint Eastwood, Sean Penn, Bradley Cooper, Ben Affleck, Quentin Tarantino, Cate Blanchett, Helen Mirren, Anne Hathaway, Marion Cotillard, and many more.

“Every year the Palm Springs International Film Festival and Awards Gala gets bigger and better while showcasing some of the world’s most acclaimed cinema,” according to Ginther, who notes that the festival, beloved by fans and industry insiders alike, provides a huge boost to the local economy and is the biggest and most glamorous event of the Coachella Valley season.

Another major economic boon to the City’s economy is Palm Springs Modernism Week, a sophisticated 10-day homage to the ideals of mid-century modern architecture. The event, held every February, celebrates a renewed appreciation for the City’s famed modernist roots as well as vintage furniture, jewelry, clothing, and memorabilia.

Some of the more famous examples of mid-century modern treasures in Palm Springs include the 1946 Neutra-designed Kaufmann House, the home that John Lautner designed in Southridge for Bob Hope and his wife Dolores, and the famous Tramway Gas Station, (now the Palm Springs Visitors Center), designed by Albert Frey, John Porter Clark and Robson Chambers. It is their work that inspired Modernism Week — and this year organizers have added a new “Fall Kick-off,” Oct. 11-14, featuring a series of double-decker bus and walking tours, films, lectures, exhibitions, cool parties, and much more!

And when it comes to all things modern, downtown Palm Springs is celebrating new and emerging shops, restaurants and boutiques — many in the City’s Uptown Design District — that focus on modern décor and interior design. In addition, Downtown and Uptown Palm Springs continue to see a plethora of new and expanded eateries, including L’Atelier Deli, Casa de Frida, Jiao, Workshop Kitchen & Bar and a new Thai Smile that will replace La Casita on the corner of Tahquitz Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive.

In fact, Palm Springs tourism and hospitality are thriving, according to Pougnet, who notes that continued tourism and hospitality gains over the past several years are the result of a more than \$200 million reinvestment in the City’s hotel stock, along with the implementation of the City Council’s popular Hotel Incentive Program.

New properties coming soon to Palm Springs include the 32-room Arrive Hotel, funded by early Facebook employee Ezra Callahan and a new J.W. Marriott Autograph Collection hotel at the site of the former Spanish Inn. Perhaps most exciting, a hip new 163-room Hard Rock Hotel will open in October 2013, replacing what was once the Hotel Zoso.

Other Palm Springs properties that have recently refreshed their looks include the Spa Resort Casino and the Hilton Palm



Top left: Tachevah, a new music festival. Right: Forever Marilyn statue on the corner of North Palm Canyon Drive and East Tahquitz Canyon Way. Below: Bradley Cooper at the 2013 Palm Springs International Film Festival Awards Gala.



PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM SOCIETY

Springs, which underwent an \$8 million transformation. In addition, the former Holiday Inn is now the hip and sophisticated Saguaro Hotel, featuring a host of cool pool parties on the weekends and the popular new Basque-inspired restaurant Tinto, led by renowned Iron Chef Jose Garces.

"These new and/or upgraded properties allow the Palm Springs brand to renew itself and reach every generation of visitor," Ginther says.

With downtown and uptown flourishing, the City Council is now turning its attention to assisting commercial landlords and tenants in other areas of Palm Springs that have not been as successful. In July, the Council created an Incentive Program to assist with improvements to commercial properties and attract new businesses in vacant locations.

Palm Springs is also a leader when it comes to local job creation, the City was designated by the state of California as one of six original "innovation hubs."

The "iHub," operated by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership and located across from Palm Springs City Hall, serves as an incubator for green companies to create new jobs in the region. Now in its third year, the iHub nurtures startup companies in the fields of wind and solar as well as high-tech and bio-tech and continues to be an "economic game changer" for Palm Springs and the entire Coachella Valley, Pougnet says.

In fact, the success of the iHub has led to a new 10,000-square-foot Accelerator Campus at the Palm Springs International Airport, which currently houses iHub graduates who are ready to conduct research and prototype development, manufacturing, and commercialization of products or services with the goal of creating more local jobs.

And when it come to stimulating our economy and supporting as many as 1,000 local jobs during peak tourism season, the tremendous success of the City's Airline Marketing Incentive Program at Palm Springs International Airport has proven to be another game-changing economic booster for the Coachella Valley. The City Council committed \$1 million to the program and popular Canadian airline WestJet was the first to take advantage; followed by United, Alaska, Frontier, Allegiant and most recently, Virgin America. This brings expanded service to Palm Springs and the entire Coachella Valley and coupled with the new \$25 million airport traffic control tower, new excitement to Palm Springs International Airport. "2012 was a record year for

passenger traffic and the opportunity for breaking that record in 2013 is looking very good indeed," Pougnet says.

And finally, let's not forget the important impact of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, whose community and economic development projects continue to boost the City's economy and play a major force in the cultural and economic enrichment of their ancestral home. The Tribe is steward to 31,500 acres of land, including the popular Indian Canyons. As the owner of the Spa Resort Casino, it is one of the city's largest employers.

"Rooted in rich history, the City and Tribal Council are dedicated to working together to improve the quality of life for our residents through a host of community partnerships," says Pougnet. "From the construction of the Richard M. Milanovich Bridge on Belardo Road to plans for a new median along Tahquitz Canyon Way, the City's important relationship with the Agua Caliente cannot be overstated and we thank them for their continued support of the City of Palm Springs."

So as Southern California's most famous resort playground celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, Palm Springs continues to transform and reinvent itself for every generation of resident and visitor looking for a unique place to relax, rejuvenate and enjoy year-round sunshine and an easy lifestyle.

When it comes to hip, happening and ultra-cool, according to Pougnet, "Palm Springs truly is like no place else!"

— Amy Blaisdell