

AHHH, PALM SPRINGS

COOL VIBES, SPLASHY POOLS AWAIT AT NEW AND RENOVATED HOTELS

BY ROSEMARY McCLURE

REMEMBER back in the day — when you took vacations and weekend trips and stayed in hotels? Happily, we can do that again. And the Palm Springs area, Southern California's favorite getaway, is ready for us with seven new or renovated hotels overflowing with cool vibes, splashy pools and luxe furnishings.

Worried about COVID-19? The Greater Palm Springs tourism industry has pledged to implement the state's latest safety guidelines. You can check out the details of the community's Safer Together, Greater Together Pledge (gpspledge.com), which lists more than 450 businesses, including hotels, restaurants and retail shops. Good news if you're planning a desert getaway.

More good news: new and renovated hotels, including

a French-inspired boutique, a hot springs spa hotel with in-room soaking tubs, and a resort water park with two 30-foot slides and a lazy river.

Bigger isn't always better here. Long before anyone had heard the term "boutique hotel," small lodgings were popular, especially with L.A. celebs who began visiting the desert nearly a century ago. They found it was easier to maintain a low profile at a motel with only a handful of rooms.

Most of the hotels we're spotlighting are small and allow pets but not kids (check when booking). Only one seems to have bargain rates, Margaritaville Resort Palm Springs, with midweek prices as low as \$114 per night. Rates at the others hover around \$225 a night or more, but spring is one of the most

expensive periods in the desert, and these proprietors have had many nights of pandemic-forced vacancies to make up for. Rates will fall by June.

AZURE PALM HOT SPRINGS

> Our first hotel isn't even in Palm Springs, but that's OK, it's nearby. Azure Palm Hot Springs is a jazzy new 40-room hotel in Desert Hot Springs, nine miles from PS. Thanks to an aquifer beneath the city, Desert Hot Springs has some of the purest hot and cold mineral springs in the world. Azure Palm has five mineral pools and 22 in-room soaking tubs. The water emerges from the hotel's private wells at 174 degrees and is cooled for use in the various pools.

Owner Maria Lease has spent a lot of time creating her attractive

resort, which has a day spa, cafe, gift shop, six landscaped acres of cabanas and a massive 40-by-90-foot main pool. "We have the largest mineral springs pool in Southern California," she said. Another plus is the view of Palm Springs and the San Jacinto Mountains. The hotel opened Thursday.

Info: (760) 251-2000, azurepalmhotsprings.com. Rates start at \$259 per night. Day passes available.

LES CACTUS

> This fun place, named after the '60s French rock 'n roll hit by Jacques Dutronc, has pink umbrellas by the pool, cute rooms and funky vintage décor in the lobby. Les Cactus, a courtyard-style hotel, has 27 rooms, most of which look out on the pool and spa. The property was built in two phases between the 1930s and 1940s. After a six-month renovation, it reopened in February 2020 but encountered pandemic issues and had to close one month later.

Info: (760) 422-5500, lescactusps.com. From \$219 per night.

CASA CODY

> What's that you say? How can Casa Cody be new? Yes, it's the oldest hotel in Palm Springs — a 29-room complex that has been around for a century and is always a guest favorite. It has been redone by new owners, the Casetta Group, and is scheduled to reopen in late April but booking rooms for May. There's wonderful history here: You can stay in the Charlie Chaplin suite or the Olympic cottage, which housed athletes during the Los Angeles 1932 Summer Olympics. Pluses: It's a historic property, with lovely buildings, a plethora of fruit trees and bougainvillea, and is in an excellent location ideal for exploring downtown Palm Springs.

Info: (760) 320-9346, casacody.com. From \$224 per night.

THE COLE

> If you enjoy Mid-



CAROLYN LAPORTE Wowi Zowi



RYAN MANNING

A WATER PARK at Hyatt Regency Indian Wells, top, a suite at Azure Palm in Desert Hot Springs and the pool at Les Cactus in Palm Springs.

century Modern décor, you'll love the 30-room Cole, a recent renovation with a colorful, clean look and a lively pool area. The Cole, constructed in 1959, reopened two weeks before the pandemic shut down everything last year. "When you open a new hotel, you expect to only do it once, not three times," said general manager David Smith III, referring to the second mandated closure last fall. The two-story hotel is on North Palm Canyon Drive in a quiet area. Owner Mark Weis has added restaurant/bar space so guests don't need to go out to eat or drink.

Info: (619) 282-1818, thecolehotel.com. From \$229 per night. Day passes available.

DIVE PALM SPRINGS

> This 11-room, French-inspired hideaway is the smallest of the new boutique hotels. It's so tiny it might be a good

spot to hold a small wedding or other event. Dive Palm Springs, on East Palm Canyon Drive, was built in 1954 as a women's apartment complex. The vibe now is Saint-Tropez, circa 1955. The L-shaped property has a long, sleek pool and fun furnishings. You'll be greeted with a glass of rosé when you check in. The restaurant is for hotel guests only.

Info: (760) 323-2231, divepalmsprings.com. From \$335 per night.

HYATT REGENCY INDIAN WELLS RESORT & SPA

> Kids might not be welcome at some Palm Springs-area hotels, but they're valued guests at the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa, which has opened an \$8-million waterpark about 20 miles southeast of downtown Palm Springs. Families can count on having fun at the HyTides Plunge Waterpark and Desert Twist Lazy River, which are the centerpiece of \$21

million worth of renovations at the 530-room Indian Wells hotel. The waterpark includes a water slide for children who don't meet the 4-foot height requirement for the larger slides.

Info: (760) 776-1234, lat.ms/hyattindianwells. From \$280 per night.

MARGARITAVILLE RESORT PALM SPRINGS

> Here's another kid-friendly hotel, Margaritaville Resort Palm Springs, the first Jimmy Buffett-branded hotel on the West Coast. The singer's business empire now includes 23 hotels in six countries. The Palm Springs resort, with 398 rooms, opened last fall in the former Riviera Mid-century Modern hotel. There's a spark of Florida in the décor, plus island-inspired drinks and dining options, and family-oriented programming.

Info: (760) 327-8311, margaritavilleresorts.com. From \$114 per night.



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