



Cali retro cool goes modern

PALM SPRINGS

Desert city offers up old Hollywood, new cuisine

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For Metro Canada



It's as though the '60s moved in and refused to leave. But while Palm Springs, Calif., honours its swinging past, there is a new energy to this low-slung city. With a population of 45,000, which triples during 'The Season' (January to April), new hotels are being built, restaurants are springing up, and the airport has expansion plans. Their estimated five million visitors a year continues to grow.

This desert heat keeps up through October, with the hottest part of the day late afternoon. So if you only have 48 hours, arrange your outdoor adventures in the morning.

Day 1

Start with a trip to the San Andreas Fault. Desert Adventure Tours has the exclusive licence to take the geologically interested through miles of bumpy, sandy and often tortured-looking terrain. Climb through a slim crack in the rocks and touch both the Pacific and North American tectonic plates at the same time.

Wipe off the dust and drop into a popular local restaurant



Spend a sunny afternoon poolside at the Saguaro Hotel. ALL PHOTOS KATHY BUCKWORTH/FOR METRO

like Trio for a fresh and reasonable lunch. All restaurants in conservation-aware Palm Springs only serve water to customers if requested.

As the day heats up, head for the hills by ascending to 8,516 feet (2,600 metres) via the rotating Palm Springs Aer-

ial Tramway. Temperatures dip a full -1 C at the top of the Chino Cliffs canyon. Tackle some of the 87 kilometres of hiking trails at the top to work up a healthy appetite for dinner.

The Workshop Kitchen is known for its Pisco Punch and

ever-changing menu. Or savour a deconstructed meal at Dish Creative Cuisine, one of Palm Spring's newest restaurants.

Day 2

Stars come out at night, but you can visit stars' homes in



Hike the rugged terrain of the San Andreas Fault, and straddle the Pacific and North American tectonic plates, left.

stroll through their beautiful grounds.

Spend a hot and sunny afternoon poolside; the Saguaro hotel rooms surround a very private and colourful pool, which has a calming vibe.

Dinner at the Tropicale embodies the cuisine and culture of Palm Springs: an organic food experience on an outdoor patio while a jazz band provides the perfect ambiance.

Visit visitpalm Springs.com for more information.

The writer was a guest of the Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism, which did not review nor approve the story.

the daytime. A specialized walking tour takes you to the heart of the Movie Colony district, playground for Frank Sinatra and pals. In a serendipitous nod to the transition between old Hollywood and new, Leonardo DiCaprio recently purchased the Dinah Shore estate.

Lunch at the celebrity-filled Parker Meridien café Norma's, which is best enjoyed after a

TRAVEL NOTES NEW TREKS, WINERY TOURS, SEASONAL SUN

Backpacking heaven

National Geographic and G Adventures have teamed up to launch a new line of 70 small-group trips to exotic and remote parts of the world. Aptly called National Geographic Journeys with G Adventures, it will focus on connecting travellers with local people and cultures, giving you the freedom to roam, but with the security of travelling with a group. Visit GAdventures.com/Twenty-five/Journeys.



Foodie road trip adventure

Quench Trip Design has a new South African adventure led by Ontario winemaker Norman Hardie slated for early next year. Johannesburg-born Hardie will take you to his favourite restaurants and wineries, including small producers like AA Badenhorst Wines and big estates like Klein Constantia. Stay in a mix of seaside cottages and luxury retreats. Visit QuenchTravel.com.



New Florida route

Porter Airlines is getting ready to fly to Florida for the first time, with new seasonal service to Orlando starting Dec. 19 and running until May. The weekly, non-stop Saturday flights will have you shaking hands with Mickey Mouse in no time. Watch for Porter Escapes vacation packages for the Florida region to also surface soon. Visit FlyPorter.com. TEXT BY DOUG WALLACE, PHOTOS PROVIDED

