



THE HORIZON HOTEL A BRIEF HISTORY

Originally called L'Horizon, the Horizon Hotel is one of the few remaining mid-century modern hotels in Palm Springs. Situated on 2.5 acres with glorious views of the San Jacinto Mountains, the hotel was originally designed in 1952 by renowned architect William Cody for Hollywood mogul Jack Wrather and his actress wife, Bonita “Bunny” Granville, as a retreat for their family and Hollywood friends. Wrather (who would go on to transform Howard Hughes’ Spruce Goose and the Queen Mary into popular Long Beach tourist attractions) produced the Lone Ranger and Lassie television series — the stars of which were frequent guests at L’Horizon.

In February 2004, Dave Scharf, a real estate developer from Portland, Oregon, purchased the hotel with a mission to revive the property’s original charm and understated elegance. A crucial aspect of the deal involved acquiring the original blueprints and numerous vintage photographs by famed photographer Julius Shulman, thus allowing Scharf to preserve much of the hotel’s original character. “I could see immediately,” says Scharf, “that beneath the layers — with the sharply-angled glass corners and low-slung profiles — this was a very special property.”

To ensure the project was sympathetic to Cody’s original vision, architect and former Cody associate Frank Urrutia was brought on board. The property’s iconic mid-century modern architecture was carefully preserved, while new amenities, such as a poolside bar and Jacuzzi spa, were added. “The completion of this historically rich hotel enables people to appreciate and enjoy the true Palm Springs experience,” says Scharf. In May 2006, the 22-room hotel once again opened its doors, thus beginning a new chapter for this legendary desert getaway.

William F. Cody, FAIA, was born in 1916 in Dayton, Ohio. He studied architecture at the University of Southern California, while working for architect Cliff May. Cody originally moved to Palm Springs seeking relief for his asthma. In 1946, he built his first project: the Del Marcos Hotel. He went on to build several country club and residential projects, including his own home — complete with several gardens and three reflecting ponds. Much of Cody’s work has been lost in recent years. The careful renovation of the Horizon Hotel, however, ensures that Cody’s contribution to modern architecture will be appreciated by future generations.

