



THE HORIZON HOTEL



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AWAY FROM HOME

### A 1950s Retreat Nabs a Leading Role as a 21st Century Hotel

Architect William Cody consistently employed 72- and 108-degree angles throughout The Horizon, creating a masterfully orchestrated conversation between the resort's multiple structures. RIGHT: Textural brick, wood beams and glass make up the composition of the man-made hall, which nature finishes with cacti and desert brush.

# On The Horizon

Text John O'Connor Photos Myroslav Rosky

**THE HORIZON HOTEL, PALM SPRINGS** Newly reopened in 2005, the 22-room Horizon Hotel in Palm Springs is a resort with a history. The vision of Hollywood mogul Jack Wrather in 1952, L'Horizon, as it was originally known, was the design of one of California's great Mid-Century Modern architects, William Cody. Cody and a handful of other architects represented a turning point in California design in the 40s and 50s, tossing out Classicism and Spanish Revival for crisp, clean Bauhaus ideals.

Here in the valley below the San Jacinto Mountains, Cody designed a two-and-a-half-acre campus of angular, single-story buildings that are at once dramatic and breathtakingly simple. During its first heyday in the early 50s, these buildings provided a hideout for many a Hollywood star. Wrather, with his actress wife Bonita Granville (best known as the actress



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Wrather’s original home has now been completely renovated as part of the resort and is referred to as The Residence, a 3-bedroom, 3-bath suite with its own kitchen, pool and fireplace. The Horizon’s queen and king suites share a similar décor and mood.



If You Go:

The Horizon  
1050 East Palm Canyon Drive  
Palm Springs, CA  
800 377.7855

[www.thehorizonhotel.com](http://www.thehorizonhotel.com)

Queen rooms begin at \$159  
King rooms begin at \$179

who played Nancy Drew in the late 1930s) had Cody design a home for them on the property as well. Wrather was best known as the producer of *Lassie* and *The Lone Ranger*. According to the hotel’s present owner Dave Scharf, it was the combination of Hollywood history and architectural provenance that lured him to purchase the run-down property in 2004.

“Lassie once had the run of building three,” Scharf told us referring to the hotels storied past. “I bought the property in 2004 when it was completely dilapidated. I’m just a big fan of Cody’s work and there was something here that is really fascinating.” Cody angled the buildings to give each room an amazing view using wide expanses of glass and centering the arrangement around the pool. Because the aptly named Horizon was designed in such a low-slung manner, fabulous mountain views extend almost 360 degrees from the center of the property.

“This is a thinking man’s architecture,” said Scharf referring to Cody, “There is a drama and an inspiration that you get from this property like nowhere else. When you’re here, you get inspired.”

The Horizon is inspirational. It seemed to us the perfect getaway for a writing retreat. But it took Scharf and his group a lot of work to bring it back. To achieve his goal, Scharf hired Cody associate Frank Urrutia to bring the project into the 21st century in a manner sympathetic to the architect’s original vision.

“The challenge on this property was that the buildings were outstanding but the infrastructure, the plumbing and the electrical were just gone,” said Scharf. “Besides the original structures, there isn’t anything that isn’t new on the property.”

Today, The Horizon once again sparkles. The newly appointed rooms feature timeless modern furnishings and fabulously comfortable beds. And, with their white-on-white beamed ceilings, indoor/outdoor glass showers and open expanses, they are a perfect reflection of Southern California’s pool-and-patio lifestyle. Walls of glass have both retractable sheers and blackout drapes for those who like to sleep late.

Rooms have fully stocked bars, hanging plasma-screen TVs, work spaces for writing and well-appointed baths stocked with L’Occitane products. Continental breakfast is provided each morning, delivered at your discretion either to your room, on your patio or poolside. Coffee is served in your own thermal French press with pastries or bagels freshly toasted and wrapped in linen napkins to stay warm. Add to this some fresh juice, a newspaper and perhaps a fresh tangerine picked from one of the fruit trees on the property and what more could you want?

For guests in search of a sedate, sophisticated getaway, The Horizon once again presents itself as a wonderful – as well as affordable – option in the heart of Palm Springs. ■