



**Your on the  
Street Reporter**



**Uyless Black**

**America's Cities  
Palm Springs**

## **Palm Springs, California Report One: Cultural Divides**

### **February 2010**

Hello from Your on the Street Reporter. During 2008, I sent you a report on the “Palm Springs Air Museum” and a review of the Parker Hotel’s restaurants (located in Palm Springs and reviewed in “Gucci and the Gulag”). This report continues our exploration of this part of California and concentrates on the city of Palm Springs itself.

I am pleased to announce a new member of my vast reporting staff. His name is Doug Duncan. He will be assisting me on these reports, as my other reporters are buried in snow banks on the East Coast. As with all my assistants, Doug will assume the name of Reporter Junior. He is not to be called Junior Reporter as this moniker would imply he is youngish. He’s pretty long in the tooth. I suppose we could call him Senior Reporter Junior, but the word-smiths reading this report would take grammatical offense. So Reporter Junior it is.

This year, Holly and I decided to become snowbirds. The 2009 winter in Idaho defeated us, so we purchased a home in Palm Springs. As most of you know, we make our primary home in the northern panhandle of Idaho, a short distance from the Canadian border. Before we take in Palm Springs places, let’s make a few observations about this part of the country, as well as north Idaho.

The cultural climates of Hayden, Idaho, and Palm Springs, California, are as different as one can imagine. Here are a few examples:

- Palm Springs is known for its gay community. Hayden is known for its White Aryan Nations population.<sup>1</sup>
- Pickup trucks abound in Hayden. They are in the minority in Palm Springs.
- In Palm Springs, if you can go to a sporting goods store and ask for directions to the tennis equipment, you will be pointed to a section of the store. The same question in most Hayden sporting goods stores will result in being pointed to the exit.
- Foreign films playing in Hayden movie theaters are as rare as a black person in a shopping mall.<sup>2</sup> Palm Springs has a theater devoted mainly to foreign films.
- A Rolls Royce will gain no special attention in Palm Springs; I have never seen one of these cars in Hayden.
- This week, Palm Springs had an exhibit of Picasso’s works at an art gallery. Hayden had an exposition of RVs on a Target store parking lot.
- Hayden has more churches than bars. Palms Springs has more bars than churches.
- It’s hunting and fishing in Hayden. It’s Picasso and paddleball in Palm Springs.

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<sup>1</sup> The cities have other claims to fame; these are partial examples.

<sup>2</sup> In a 2005 report, I documented my almost futile search for a person of color---any color---in the Hayden area. See “Skin Sightings,” dated December 24-26, 2005. Update: On March 5, 2010, I sighted my first black person walking a street in Hayden. It was a seminal event for my investigation.

So, what's new? Different parts of the world house different sorts of people. There are no Baptists in Baghdad.<sup>3</sup> So what? Nothing really, except to say that people tend to congregate in places where they feel comfortable and secure. Slim (of *Slim's Wisdoms*) would be as out of place in a Palm Springs gay bar as a Palm Springs gay person would be at Slim's bar in Hayden.

Another observation: I can parody redneck Slim without mercy, and my readers will compliment me on my social insights. If I were to do the same to a gay person, I would be castigated as a homophobe. That is, unless I were gay. Then, my satire would be insightful and funny. Same goes with my parodying the stereotypes associated with blacks. I'm white, so I can't do it.

It's become a one-way street for us WHASPs (White Heterosexual Anglo-Saxon Protestants). We can receive barbs, but we can't deliver them.

I suppose that's only fair. For the better part of the last few centuries, we WHASPs (and WHASCs; the "C" being Catholics) have been on the delivering end. But we weren't delivering just barbs. We were delivering bombs and associated mayhems---along with religious anthems. At this late date, I'm thankful I'm the recipient of only barbs.

Anyway, to each their own, *and let's leave each other alone*. Let's stop trying to convert everyone to our own way of living. At the end of the day, we are just trying to get along in life and be happy. Let's help each other out.

Thanks for listening. No more social commentary. Now, we move on to examine Palm Springs, a fine and funky town.

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<sup>3</sup> There may have been at one time; but now, they are likely dead.

## Palm Springs, California Report Two: Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

February 2010

During a stay in this part of southern California, I hope you will carve-out a few hours to take the tramway to Mt. San Jacinto State Park. The “Valley Station” for this tramway is located just outside the city limits of Palm Springs, and if your time is limited, you can take the tram up and back in about 90 minutes. But try to linger for a while at the top. The “Mountain Station” has a small museum, guided tours, many walking paths, restaurants, and a movie about the park.

Figure 1 shows several views of the park. The top left photo was taken as we neared the top of the tramway run. A hazy view of Palm Springs can be seen in the valley below. The top right



Figure 1. Scenes from the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

picture shows the steepness of the slopes. The mountain offers challenges for all climbers. Reporter Junior and I exchanged views about the difficulty of erecting tramway and telephone towers. He offered that much of the work was likely done with helicopters. Hmm, good work Doug. Reporters--- junior or senior---must be able to ferret out facts and associated truths from nebulous situations. My thought was how long it would take to, say, scale

this mountain with one part of a telephone pole: *Damn! I just got here with this insulator. Now, it's time to go home. Good thing I'm getting paid by the hour.*

The contrast at the top of the tramway (10,801 feet in altitude) with Palm Springs below was remarkable. It was in the 70s in the city. Up here, snow was on the ground, as seen in the bottom left photo in Figure 1.

The photo in the bottom right of Figure 1 is a view of the San Bernardino mountain range, which is to the north of San Jacinto. As you can see, the views are spectacular. It's worth your time to take this tramway.

Reporter Junior had misplaced his camera case, and the three of us were prowling around the Mountain Station looking for it. (Later, I misplaced my prescription shades.<sup>4</sup>) I made my way to an administration counter to enquire about Reporter Junior's loss. I turned on my recorder:

<sup>4</sup> This fine establishment not only found my glasses, but returned them to me via mail...only two days later.

- Reporter, "I've been looking at your handouts. We could spend days up here and not backtrack the trails."
- Aerial Tramway person, "Yes, we offer guided nature walks for beginners...all the way to a 12-mile round trip to the highest peak in southern California."
- "Twelve miles. Up and down?"
- "Yes, it's not for..."
- "Me?"
- "Ha. Couldn't say sir."
- "Just joking. Eh, why do you call this an aerial tramway? Seems redundant. Aren't all tramways aerial?"
- "Well, never thought about it. But I think the term 'tram' describes a cable car in general."
- "Sure, a mental lapse. Happens more and more."
- "Have a good day, sir."

Doug was still looking for his camera case. Thanks to the lost-and-found facility, I found the case before he happened to walk by. He was impressed about my sleuth-like ability to find lost things at lost-and-found desks. But then, he was just breaking into the game of hard-knuckle investigative journalism.

### Ten Essentials for Survival

One of the offerings at this park is a hiking trails movie. We were cautioned about the danger of not being prepared for the more arduous treks. In a movie and in the movie lobby, we were informed to always carry ten items on our persons. I took a picture of these survival items, as seen in Figure 2.

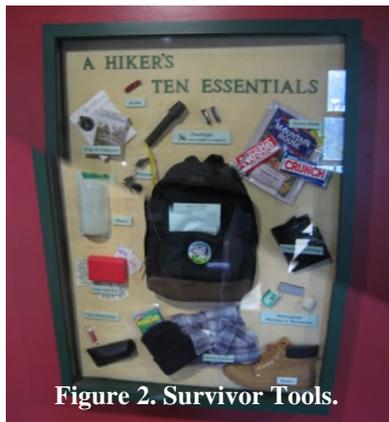


Figure 2. Survivor Tools.

The first essential is to wear something on your feet. Do not venture onto an ice-bitten trail in your socks or barefooted. The second essential is to always carry Crunch candy bars. And so on: a flashlight, water, a first aid kit, matches. The movie moderator added an eleventh essential item: a whistle. I had not thought much about this tool, but it seemed to make sense. I would have added or substituted three other essentials: (a) a GPS-satellite phone, (b) more clothing, (c) a few shots of XO cognac. Option (a) will almost guarantee you a rescue. Options (b) and (c) will make the wait for rescue more comfortable.

The reportage team decided to conduct an in-depth investigation of the bar, which is located at the top of this mountain. The views from the bar stools were not quite as stunning as from the balconies, but the drinks were fine. The Quesadilla was bar-like, but after all, we were sitting at a bar.

## **Palm Springs, California Report Three: The Plaza Racquet Club**

### **February 2010**

I am somewhat reluctant to file this report. In so doing, more people will find-out about the Plaza Racquet Club, which might result in more tennis players vying for court time. But the club deserves to be recognized, so here goes.

The place is located at 1300 East Baristo Street in Palm Springs. It has nine hard-surface, lighted courts. During my first week here, I played every day. (But I reinjured my arm and am now laying-off tennis once more.) The teaching pro is Bill Parsha and is one of the best instructors I have come across. (He's got a fine forehand as well.) Kurt and Anna Haggstrom are the managers of the club. I'm told they lease the physical facility from someone else. If so, they add great value to the site. They run the place beautifully:

- The courts are in top-notch condition.
- Membership is available on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. Perfect for snowbirds.
- The grounds are well-maintained. Trees, grass, plants, and flowers compliment the courts.
- A member can play as much as he or she wants. As long as a court is available, you can sign-up. The "one-play-a-day" rule does not apply here.
- A member tells Kurt, Anna, or Bill that, say, he wants a singles or doubles match at 11:00 AM the next day, and knows if he shows up, he will have a game with a like-skilled player. For strangers to the area (again, snowbirds), this is a great service.
- The fees are reasonable, even for the rental of a ball machine.
- The ball machine actually works. Even more, in the five times I rented it, *not once* did a ball stick. The performance of this machine is akin to a vending machine *never* malfunctioning. It just does not happen, except for this machine.

I stayed in Palm Springs for over a month. I wish my old-age elbow would not act its age. But I'm coming back in a few weeks. I hope to be ready to once again use the Plaza Racquet Club. If you're in this area and want to hit the ball---and you hit the ball into the net a lot---let's get together.

In a previous visit to Palm Springs, I played some tennis at the JW Marriott Resort and Spa facility (located in Palm Desert). I also recommend this facility. It has hard, clay, and grass courts, plus a backboard and ball machine. Iced water is brought to your court, along with fresh towels. The staff will also arrange a match for you.

The Marriott's services come with costs. Court time and ball machine rentals are pricey. Teaching fees are about the same as the Plaza Racquet Club, but you will pay for each hour you rent a court. For players who play frequently, the tab will add up. All in all, if you are staying in the Palm Springs area, the Plaza Racquet Club would be my recommendation. I'll have more reviews of tennis facilities in later reports.

For 2011, I intend to stay at Palm Springs into March to attend the Indian Wells tennis tournament. It's one of the major tournaments of the non-majors. It attracts all the top players. My bucket list includes attending the four majors, plus the Indian Wells "minor major." I've done Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. The French Open will be marked-off my list this summer. Only the Australian Open will be left. I'm waffling on this one. I've played on the center court at the site (taking a lesson), so I may content myself with my vicarious trip into fame and forego serious jet-lag.

### **Reporter Junior Takes Up Tennis**

Doug was once a professional baseball player. As well, he has done serious cowboy stuff, such as roping. I've been told he plays excellent racquet ball. I don't know much about baseball or racquet ball, but when combined with his horse hobby, it's obvious he is a fine athlete.

He and I hit the tennis ball a few times. He was new to the game, but he picked it up faster than any beginner I have known. Given his baseball and racquetball background, I was not surprised by his skills, but I was impressed by the ease in which he assimilated the game.

Even more impressive: Reporter Junior was (is) undergoing chemotherapy treatment for cancer. Some people under this treatment would be too tired to run around a tennis court, but Doug ribbed me for playing only two sets. Another notable aspect of this situation: Doug has not lost one hair on any part of his body that I could see. Given the methods and types of treatments, he's a case study. His doctors intend to write a paper on his situation.

Doug's an inspiration. He never complains about his disease and will talk about it only on occasion. He keeps going. He asked me to play longer than I cared to (and I'm in pretty good shape.)

### **Resoluteness**

While the datelines for these reports are February 2010, this next incident occurred after I returned to our home in Idaho:

I was walking into the grocery cart area of the local store. I passed by an old man in this lobby who was mounted on an adult tricycle. I paid little attention to him, but as I walked by I could make out that he was looking at me and mumbling something. I turned-back and asked if he were talking to me.

In jumbled words coming from the left side of his mouth, I finally understood he was asking me to shift a couple carts away from a wall so he could move his vehicle into a non-walking part of the lobby. I moved the carts, and then watched him go through several laborious minutes of backing his tricycle into his chosen slot.

After successfully parking, he began a painful effort to remove a walking-assistance tool from his bicycle basket. He could not get the piece out, so I gave him a hand. After which, he held on to another cart as he pushed and pulled his way onto his feet. Eventually, he was sort-of standing up. During this time, he occasionally made comments, which I could not understand. Who could blame him if they were four-letter words?

I asked if I could be of further help. He said no thanks, so off I went to traipse lightly down the aisles for my groceries. During these traipses, his awkward image stayed with me. But only for a while, then I returned to my contained universe and forgot about him.

Later, I wished I had followed him out onto the streets of Hayden. I wanted to see how he navigated his way. He could barely get off on this bike, yet there he was fighting old age and strokes. As game a person as I've ever come across.

### **Models**

Doug and the man in the grocery store are miles apart in their physical abilities. My placing them in a similar context has to do with their resolve and spirit. I don't know how I would react if I contacted serious cancer. I'm not sure I could handle it as well as Doug. If nothing else, I doubt I would retain my hair. But more, I'm not sure I would retain my wits and sense of humor.

The man in the store---who was close to being under medical house arrest---also gave me inspiration. I may be headed for a similar fate. If so, I will keep him as a role model.

Later, I thought about my concern about a wimpy elbow injury, one that only prevents me from engaging in a frivolous hobby. What meaningless egoism. And here I am, with a bucket list item of attending tennis tournaments. At times, my self-indulgence seems fatuous.

But then, thinking about Doug and considering the man on the tricycle, I return to a quote I use often in these essays, "Living well is the best revenge." Do it while you can my friend; the next act may be cancelled.

## Palm Springs, California Report Four: The Follies Show

### February 2010

The Plaza Theater is located in downtown Palm Springs. It's a famous place because of its history. It opened its doors in 1936 as a movie theater, showing the film *Camille*, starring Greta Garbo and Robert Taylor. It also hosted live productions. Jack Benny and Bob Hope used the Plaza to broadcast some of their radio programs. Frank Sinatra and Donald O'Connor performed in concerts there.

If you have only one night to "go on the town," you might want to check out the Follies show at this theater. It's vaudeville, pure and simple. It has much of the flair of the old Ziegfeld Follies.

The night we attended, most of the audience was made up of middle to old age customers. But a few younger people were in attendance. After the show, I spotted two men in the lobby who still had hair on their heads. I asked them what they thought of the show. They said it was "super" and "awesome." Perhaps it was not on the order of these superlatives. But it was great fun and of very high quality. We found ourselves belly-laughing on several occasions.

The entertainment is as fine as a high-end Las Vegas show. The Follies venue is a small stage and a relatively small auditorium that does not provide a budget to pay for high tech gadgetry.

Who cares? It's vaudeville! The entertainment comes from the people on the stage; not cascading waterfalls, aerodynamic acrobats, or ice rinks rising from the floor.

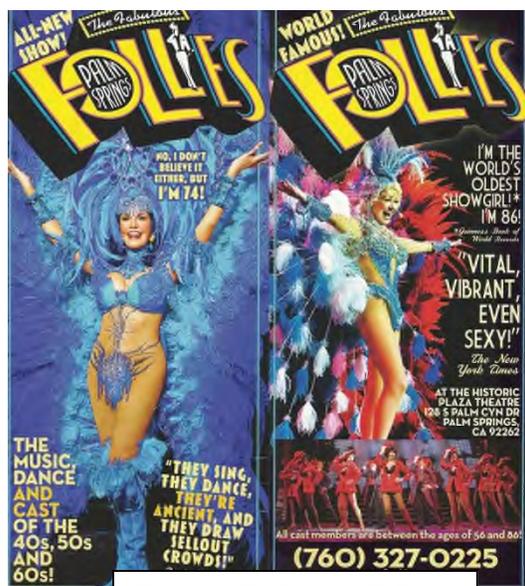


Figure 3. Frolicking Follies.

The most remarkable part of the show is its cast. They are all old, very old. Some are much older than this writer who has been around several bends in the river. Most of the dancers are in their 50s to 80s, and while not doing double flips on the stage, they manage an adroit set of movements to the music. As examples, I've taken the liberty of using two photos from a Follies brochure to illustrate this cast (Figure 3).<sup>5</sup> Notice the ages of these two lovely people: 74 and 86. An old saying goes, "As we grow old, the beauty steals inward."<sup>6</sup> For these two, it also steals outward.

<sup>5</sup> Photos in this report (Report Four) are for personal use only. They are not to be used for commercial purposes. For permission for non-personal use, contact [www.psfillies.com](http://www.psfillies.com).

<sup>6</sup> Bronson Alcott, *Ralph Waldo Emerson Journal*, in Leonard Roy Frank, *Quotationary* (New York: Random House, 2001), 17.

The creators of the Follies are Riff Markowitz and May Jardin. Mr. Markowitz is the Master of Ceremonies for the show. He has many performances under his belt. With his stage zeal and presence, you would think he was just getting started. As many of you know, it is tiring and difficult to do public performances repeatedly. It can get old. Yet the performer owes it to the audience to give every performance as if it were the only one. It's a hard act to pull off, and Mr. Markowitz performs his act with flair and élan.

Of course, the dancers did not get around the stage as easily as they once did. But given their age, they gave extraordinary performances. They have impressive resumes; performances in top-notch Broadway shows and TV programs are common entries in their biographies.

### **Sidebar: Get a Life!**

Recently, I was watching a morning TV talk show. Barbara Walters was telling her colleagues and the audience that she was not doing anymore Oscar parties/interviews because she was "Sick of it." I never knew she did Oscar parties in the first place, but I prefer watching movies to watching a TV program about movies. Anyway, this program showed reruns of Barbara making appearances for the program by walking down staircases. She said she was tired of doing that; that on one occasion, she rode down an escalator but was hanging on for "dear life." She mentioned a man was placed in front of her: just in case she fell forward on the escalator---on which she was stationary, yet hanging on for dear life. I said to myself, *Ms. Walters, your dear life should get a life. Those people in the Follies cast would give their next face lift to have had the opportunities you had. And the Follies folks actually do something!*

**Ventriloquist.** The show also featured a ventriloquist. His name is Brad Cummings. He's very good, very funny. He's appeared on the late shows (such as David Letterman). The best part of his act was sitting a person from the audience on his knee, placing his hand on the back of this person's neck and having the person open his mouth as he pressed his neck. During this time he "threw his voice" to the movements of the person's mouth! OK, maybe you had to be there to appreciate how funny it was. Anyway, if Brad Cummings comes to your part of the woods, take in his show.

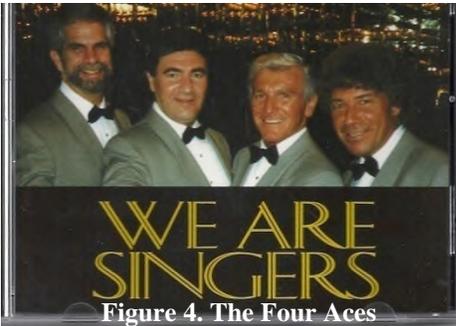
**Four Aces.** Each Follies show includes an appearance of guest performers. Like their audience, they are also old. I was prompted to attend this show when:

- Reporterette, "U, this ad about a Follies show: The Four Aces are also appearing."
- Reporter, "The Four Aces! I'm getting tickets. I loved those guys. They sang one of my favorite songs."
- "Eh, you've yet to name one of those old groups and their songs."
- "Sure I have. Take the Four Freshmen. They sang 'Moments to Remember.' "
- (I had Holly on this one, as she was too young to remember the group or the song.)
- "Anyway, I'll always remember one of the Four Aces' songs because my high school sweetheart and I made it OUR song."
- (My wife is not territorial about women who are no longer extant.)
- Reporterette, "What's the song?"
- "It's 'Love is a Many Splendored Thing.' "
- "You're sure?"

- “You bet.”
- During this conversation, I was wondering if the Crew Cuts did “Love is a Many Splendored Thing” and the Four Aces did “Sha-Boom.” (If you know the answer, I wager your hair is white, blue, or nonexistent.)

It turns out I was correct. To top it off, one of the four Four Aces was a member of the original four Four Aces! He was well-preserved, and I mean that remark as a compliment. He was trim and still had his beautiful voice. The other three Four Aces were not the original four Four Aces, but they sounded exactly like them.

After the show, when the cast was in the lobby selling CDs and signing autographs, I mentioned to one of the three Four Aces that their songs sounded identical to the original recordings. He started to thank me when I asked if they were doing karaoke.



Joke! I said. He smiled, but did not place his autograph on my CD cover, which is shown in Figure 4.

When do the Four Aces cease to be the Four Aces? When does the Kingston Trio cease to be the Kingston Trio? It seems these groups go on indefinitely. The Platters, one of my favorite groups, no longer have any of the original members in the troupe. Yet, they call themselves the Platters. I think it’s okay if one of the original members of the group is still in the group. But after no one is left, the group should be disbanded. To keep them going is akin to a total stranger to Frank Sinatra or Elvis Presley appearing as Frank Sinatra or Elvis Presley; not as a parody, but as the original.

Mr. Markowitz concluded the evening by complimenting his cast, and deservedly so. During his wrap-up, he observed that the rigorous work of the actors and actresses in preparing for the show was the main reason they did not look like the audience.

## **Palm Springs, California Report Five: Dining Out**

**February, 2010**

Hello from Your On the Street Reporter. Reporterette, your Reporter and a new member of my staff, Doug Duncan (Reporter Junior), have taken to the streets of Palm Springs. We are joined by Beth, who assumes the title of Reporterette Junior. She is Doug's mate and Holly's sister.

Armed with blank notebooks, empty stomachs, dry palates, and open minds, we attacked the restaurants and bistros of Palm Springs. (A few are reviewed in this report, more to come later.)

We were happy to have an expanded staff for our arduous operations. Plus, Reporter Junior and Reporterette Junior are fine company. We reporters need camaraderie during our lonely vigils at street-side cafes and bars.

### **Lyons English Grille**

The first review is the Lyons English Grille, located on E. Palm Canyon Drive. As the name suggests, the Grille is in keeping with an English pub. It's similar in ambience but of higher quality: Lyons has better food and is more generous with the drinks. Our waitress claimed, "Best pour in town." Until recently (since the early 1990s), London grilles have been noted for stingy, exorbitantly priced drinks and stringy, dry food.

Lyons is old-fashioned. It reminds me of well-known Tam O'Shanter's, which is located near Griffith Park Observatory in the Los Angeles area. Unfortunately for gray panthers, it represents a dying institution: A place that serves up fine food and old musical favorites. Old as in popular tunes of the 60s and 70s; ad-libbed renditions of classical pieces; former top ten hits from Tony Bennett and Judy Garland.

Think of Lyons' entertainment as a Lawrence Welk evening, but without a tap dancer, and with a piano player and singer. Except for the fine food, people without gray hair will likely have a less than pleasant night at Lyons. I've been taken to task about this last point. My editorial staff thinks old *and* young would like the show.

The piano player (Michael Healey) played all requested scores. He offered a sizable part of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." I requested Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." He responded, "I haven't played it in a long time. I'll have to do some improvising." Which he did...considerably, but it was enjoyable and fun to listen to his interpretation.

The female singer (Anna Rose) has been performing at Lyons since 1992. She held key and pitch, both at the same time. I liked her stage presence: Hands to her side, or clasped together next to her stomach, she stood next to the piano and belted them out. No wasted gestures. Super Bowl half time shows and most of the current popular music groups could take lessons from Anna. Her rendition of "Don't Cry for me Argentina" was nothing short of stunning.

### **Old Times and an Old Owner**

The original owner, old by even my standards, came in for a visit. He was clearly held in esteem and loved by many of his patrons. Many came around to talk to him. So did I.

I introduced myself as a paying customer. This gesture gave me license to sit-down at his table. We talked for a while. Because I knew he had been in the southern California area for many years, I brought-up a related subject (this abbreviated conversation is paraphrased from scribbled notes taken on a bar napkin):

- Reporter, "My friends have been telling me about your place. It's a famous spot."
- Owner, "Thank you."
- "It reminds me of two clubs I used to go to in Hollywood. One was the Crescendo; the other was the Interlude. They were in the same building on Sunset Strip."
- "Yes. One over the other."
- "In one evening, I saw Bobby Short at one of the clubs and Ella Fitzgerald at the other. Pretty amazing, and all for a two-drink cover charge."
- "Bobby played here when he was a young man. So did Nat King Cole."
- "I grew to like Nat King Cole. What a voice! I saw him at the Greek Theatre, but never at a club....Well, thanks for the conversation. Good talking with you."
- "Thank you."

Give this place a go. Lyons is not for everyone, but then, everyone is not for Lyons.

### **Trilussa**

The Trilussa restaurant is located in Cathedral City (on Route 111), which is adjacent to Palm Springs. It serves Italian food and very good food at that. In a prior visit to Palm Springs, we had lunch here and experimented with some of their sauces. I thought they were tasty enough to put on most anything: Eggs, pasta, pancakes, they would make boxed cornbread edible.

The night we ate at Trilussa on this trip, a piano player and a singer provided the entertainment. I had a fine pasta dinner, the best I've had in a long time.

Before the meal, I walked to the stage area to request a song (What else at this place? Dean Martin's "Memories Are Made of This"). During my conversation with the singer, I heard someone shout:

- "Hey You!"
- I turned-around to see if I might have been the 'you' in question.
- A man was looking straight at me. He repeated, "Yeah, hey you!"
- "Me?"
- "Yeah, you."
- "What can I do for you?"
- "Your wife said you always answer to U."
- "Oh! It was 'Hey U!' ...as in the initial."
- "Yeah. My name is Sammy, I run this place." (He and Larry Kramer own it.)
- "Hello, my name is..."

- “I know your name already. It’s U!”
- “Yeah, I have some fun with it sometimes. I answer the phone, ‘Hello, this is U.’ It surprises the caller. By the way Sammy, we love your place.”
- “Come by for brunch tomorrow. I’m doing the cooking out here on the main floor. I’ll make whatever you want.”
- “We’ll be there.”

The next day, we showed up for brunch. Sammy was behind the buffet counter. We sat down, and he came over and thanked us for showing-up. He even remembered my name.

- “Hello, U!”
- “Hello, Sammy. Thanks. What’s in store for us?”
- After complimenting me on my choice of a wife, Sammy replied, “A special dish, with one of my sauces.”
- “OK.”

While he was cooking, I asked about his background, and why he was in the restaurant business. He said he liked to cook. That is a fine a reason as I can think of.

In the meantime, I feasted on Sammy’s mussels, done in an exquisite sauce. The main meal was all we had hoped it would be. Sammy came over again and told us he had another place in Palm Springs, named Sammy G’s Tuscan Grill. We told him we would pay it a call. On our next visit, we will.

### **Doug Duncan’s Dunkin’ Donuts**

Doug Duncan’s Dunkin’ Donuts does not yet exist. I’m thinking that Doug Duncan (Reporter Junior) should open a donut shop in Canada. For those readers who have not traveled to Canada, Canadians are addicted to donuts, curling, hockey, and Palm Springs ---in that order. Put up a donut store anywhere, even in the middle of the wastelands of the Yukon Territories, and you will make a mint. Up there, Inuits, Moose, and reverse snowbirders would flock to your store.

And just consider: If a donut shop were named Doug Duncan Dunkin’ Donuts, there would be so many customers that Doug would have to send them next door to his competitor. Why? Because Canadians, like Americans, are attracted to catchy names.

Besides, I met many people during this jaunt to Palm Springs. Most of them were Canadian. The snowbird migration is huge. Yet, there are very few donut shops in this city. Doug’s donut shop would attract donut-deprived Canadians by the hundreds.

In addition, think of the jingles Doug could place on TV: “Let Doug Duncan Dunk Your Donut.” Too suggestive? Maybe, but more inane jingles have become famous and made companies boatloads of money...Sorry, I got carried away. Back to existing restaurants.

**ZIN American Bistro.** This restaurant is in downtown Palm Springs. Take it in. It has a varied menu. For example: Mussels, French Onion soup, tapas, and Italian choices. The mussels were

top-notch, and with the homemade bread could make up a complete meal. Make sure you try their custom-made cheesecake. It's different and excellent.

**Pomme Frite.** One of our favorites in downtown Palm Springs is the Pomme Frite. We ate there twice. It reminds me of a small European bistro. Sit at an outside table. Watch the passersby, as they watch you. You will be a happier viewer than they. You will be eating at Pomme Frite. They will be thinking about it.

**LGS Prime Steakhouse.** This restaurant is also downtown. It reminds me of the Prime Rib in Washington, DC, but does not have quite the history behind it as does the DC establishment. (Classy hookers at the bar...so it is rumored.) It's fine but pricey.

**Las Casuelas Nuevas.** This Mexican restaurant is on E. Palm Canyon Drive in Cathedral City. The building and overall décor are attractive. I recommend the fish tacos. They were the best fish tacos I ever tasted. OK, they were the first, but they were still delicious.

**Peabody's Café.** For an inexpensive meal in a casual place, try Peabody's Café. Located in downtown Palm Springs, it's next to the Plaza Theatre (site of the Follies show). Their Bloody Mary is tailor-made, and they refuse to give-out the recipe. I noticed the service was slow during their busy hours, but the drink itself is worth a visit. Peabody's Café's breakfasts are generous and inexpensive.

### **Wrapping up these Reviews**

As you see, I've not written poor reviews on these Palm Springs eateries. Truth is, other than fast food chains---and I may come across as effete---my winter home in Hayden, Idaho, does not have many restaurants. I was starved, so to speak, for some original food. I also wanted to get away from the (admittedly, now somewhat undercover) presence of white supremacy.<sup>7</sup> ...Hey you there, that guy over there from White Aryan Nations, put away that gun!

Ah, not to worry. This week (March 9, 2010), FOX news informed us one of the major enclaves of the White Aryan Nations is leaving North Idaho for a small community in Oregon. The citizens in this town are banding together to try to keep these fine folks away. You know the old story: There goes the neighborhood.

### **Picking the Fruit from the Trees**

The place we purchased in Palm Springs offers a variety of fine features. It's near downtown Palm Springs. It has several swimming pools and six lighted tennis courts. But one of my main reasons for buying the place is its abundance of orange, grapefruit, and lemon trees. They are planted throughout the condominium common areas.

Since childhood, I've had visions of waking up, walking out into the yard, and pulling a fresh orange from a tree for my morning juice. This vision was not just imagination, it was a fantasy. Growing up in southeastern New Mexico, I had no opportunity to pull anything from a tree except a leaf. Even more, trees were not abundant in this part of America. Those that managed to

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<sup>7</sup> But still in evidence, as told in other reports.

survive were not fruit trees, but hearty, meddlesome Elms. (They played havoc with sidewalks, pipes, and streets.)

During this visit to Palm Springs, on a couple mornings, I pulled myself out of bed and walked out of the apartment. A few yards from the front door, I came to a tree ripe with pink grapefruits. I pulled a few of these delights from the tree and carried them to the kitchen. There, I opened them up and dined on the fruits of my sleepy and slothful labor.

It still must be said: Living well is the best revenge.