



## Pack Rats of the Rat Pack

HOPPING AROUND THE VINTAGE FURNITURE SCENE IN PALM SPRINGS, CA

**“Swanky junk. I hate to admit it,  
but I like some of that stuff.”**  
—Michael Zadoorian,  
*Second Hand: A Novel*

PEOPLE HAVE FLOCKED TO THE RESORT TOWN OF PALM Springs since the 1930s. Hollywood celebrities for the weekend, Midwestern business tycoons for the entire winter. Those who could afford it had second homes built here – many of which were early examples of the Modern architecture for which Palm Springs is now world-famous. Architects like Richard Neutra, Albert Frey, and E. Stewart Williams made names for themselves here, and helped put Palm Springs on the map.

Fast-forward 50 years. In the late '90s, with the mid-century Modern revival in full swing, Palm Springs was experiencing its

own revival. Its architectural treasures were being rediscovered by a new generation. And with the rediscovery of Modern architecture came the rediscovery of Modern furniture, lighting, and decorative arts. Once again, people were flocking to Palm Springs, only now for the overwhelming stock of vintage goods.

Palm Springs is a junker's paradise. What's passable here is really good, and the good stuff can be spectacular. You can find things in Palm Springs that you simply won't find anywhere else, sometimes with a celebrity provenance. With so many high-caliber shops, you may need the entire weekend to see them all. Thankfully, they're packed close together and interspersed with restaurants and cafés, just in case the junking begins to feel too much like work.

### III ANTIQUE MALL

**68-401 E. Palm Canyon Dr., Cathedral City, 760.202.0215**

111 Antique Mall owners John Hall and John Connell have been part of the vintage Modern scene for years. When Hall opened John's Resale Furniture in the early '90s, he was the first to deal exclusively in Modern design – a lonely place to be according to Hall: “It was a joke. People were laughing at me.” Nobody's

laughing now. The duo has what Connell calls “two supermarkets of mid-century Modern.” With more than 23,000 square feet of space and nearly 100 dealers between them, you could easily spend the entire morning at either of these two malls. If you can’t find something in one of the 111 Antique Malls, you’re simply not trying. The greater challenge is showing restraint among the sea of vintage pottery, glass, lighting, furniture, and art – from kitsch to high-end, from a \$12 ashtray to a \$2,500 sectional. Hall and Connell say right now their younger customers are clamoring for ‘70s furniture – think chrome, Lucite, and mirror-covered pieces.



111 Antique Mall

### DAZZLES

**1035 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.327.1446**

If there was an award for Browsing Time Per Square Foot, Dazzles would be the hands-down winner. Owner Mike Sauls describes his shops as “a department store” with an impressive collection of furniture, lighting, and knick-knacks from the ‘20s through the ‘70s. Then there’s the collection of completely refinished outdoor furniture. But Dazzles is best known for costume jewelry. This modest shop is home to a collection that is second to none. Sauls says these “colorful, fun pieces” are popular in part because they take us back to simpler times, when good design could still be whimsical. Customers don’t seem to mind if a particular piece has a little wear to it – the authenticity can’t be beat.

### GALLERIA

**457 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.323.4576**

The Galleria is made up of seven shops covering a range of mid-century designs. Up front you’ll find a spectacularly eclectic mix of items including the best of American, French, Italian, and Scandinavian art and design. The collection reflects the varied interests of owner Jim Gaudineer, whose passion is “discovering the Modern[ism] that was going on all around the world.” For Gaudineer, the “great unknowns” are far more interesting than the icons. He prefers to carry “things that are one of a kind, mostly,” like his choice selection of “vernacular paintings.” Be sure to stop in Phil Hawkins Fine Art & Antiques and Bon Vivant.



Dazzles



Galleria



Mod Springs

### MOD SPRINGS

**1117 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.327.5400**

One of the first things you'll notice is the desk to the right and two comfortable chairs to make yourself at home while you study the shop's vast inventory. The feeling is that of an interior design showroom and that's no coincidence. When he's not rearranging the furniture at Mod Springs, co-owner Greg Ledesma is rearranging other people's furniture as an interior designer. He says he lives for Modern furniture, keeping one eye on the classics and one eye on the latest trends. That way, Ledesma and partner Glenn Clarke are able to fill out their inventory of vintage Modern staples (think Knoll sofas with original Alexander Girard fabric!) with some flavors of the month (think Hollywood Regency decadence). When it comes to the trendy pieces, though, Ledesma likes to be cautious, searching out "pieces with true beauty and craftsmanship."



Courtney Newman of Modern Way

### MODERN WAY

**2755 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.320.5455**

Owner Courtney Newman was one of the founding members of the Palm Springs Modern Committee; he's also co-chair of the Architecture Design Council at the Palm Springs Art Museum. So you might think Newman takes his Modern design very, very seriously but you'd only be partly right. Visiting Modern Way feels a little like visiting the prop warehouse for a James Bond film. (*Diamonds Are Forever* from 1971, perhaps.) Although Modern Way is loaded with a range of serious Modern designs from the middle of the last century, what really jumps out is the white lacquer, chrome, and Lucite from the '60s and early '70s. Designer names like Paul Evans, Milo Baughman, and Pierre Cardin (who applied his fashion savvy to furniture design in the '70s). It is this "glamorous, sexy, flamboyant ... and over-the-top" look Newman likes best. It provides the perfect respite from the

serious business of preserving Modern architecture, and it's a look that's becoming increasingly popular with a more knowledgeable and adventurous buying public. Newman says, "people understand it more, so they want to mix it up." Unfortunately, one of the best pieces here isn't for sale – Newman's '68 ragtop Eldorado parked out front.

**PALM SPRINGS CONSIGNMENT**

**497 N. Indian Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.416.0704**

To find the best food in town, you eat where the locals eat, right? The same goes for vintage shopping. In Palm Springs, they all go to Palm Springs Consignment—the only consignment store that specializes in vintage Modern design. The "treasure hunt" feel and moderate prices make this a favorite for LA dealers and Hollywood set designers, as well. According to co-owner James Claude, "we're never too busy to look up and say hello to somebody walking in the store." So stay a while and stroll around; but be sure to pet the store mascots—Cody and Jack.



Palm Springs Consignment

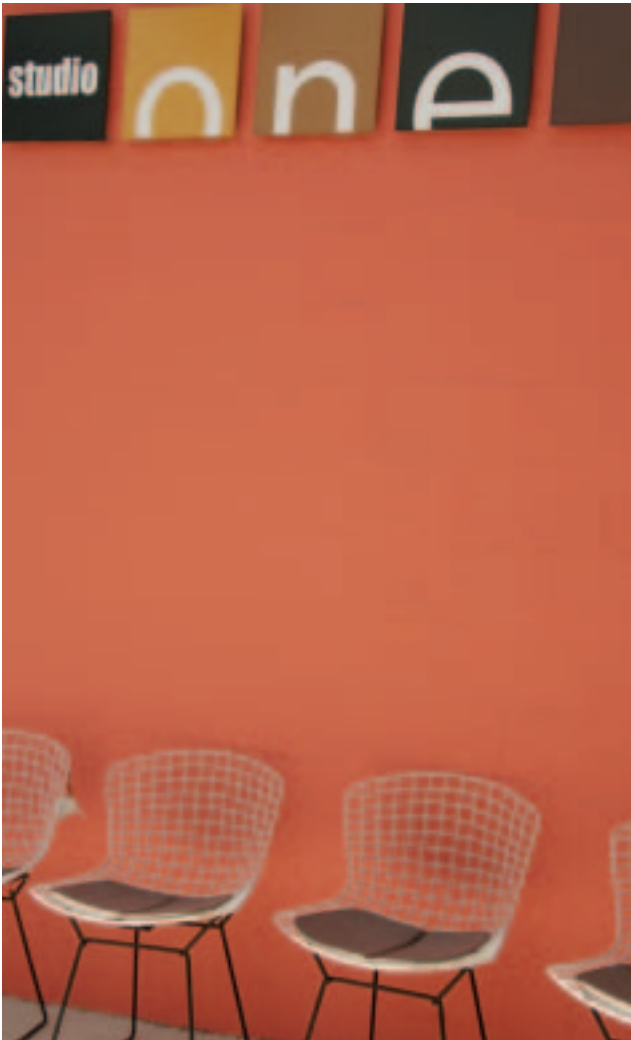
**RETROSPECT**

**666 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.416.1766**

You only need to watch one or two episodes of *Antiques Roadshow* to know that condition is everything and patina is priceless. That's fine, so long as you don't mind sitting on busted springs covered in crunchy (and possibly toxic) foam and threadbare fabric. When it comes to upholstered vintage furniture, "original condition" simply isn't much fun. Enter Retrospect. Here you'll find all your mid-century Modern favorites restored to like-new (or better) condition. Owner Laine Scott says simply, "we restore everything." Or, nearly everything. Scott is quick to add that he seldom tampers with "museum-(quality) pieces." Mostly, it depends on how the furniture is going to be used. It's one thing to have an original Coconut Chair as a piece of sculpture; it's another thing to actually use it.



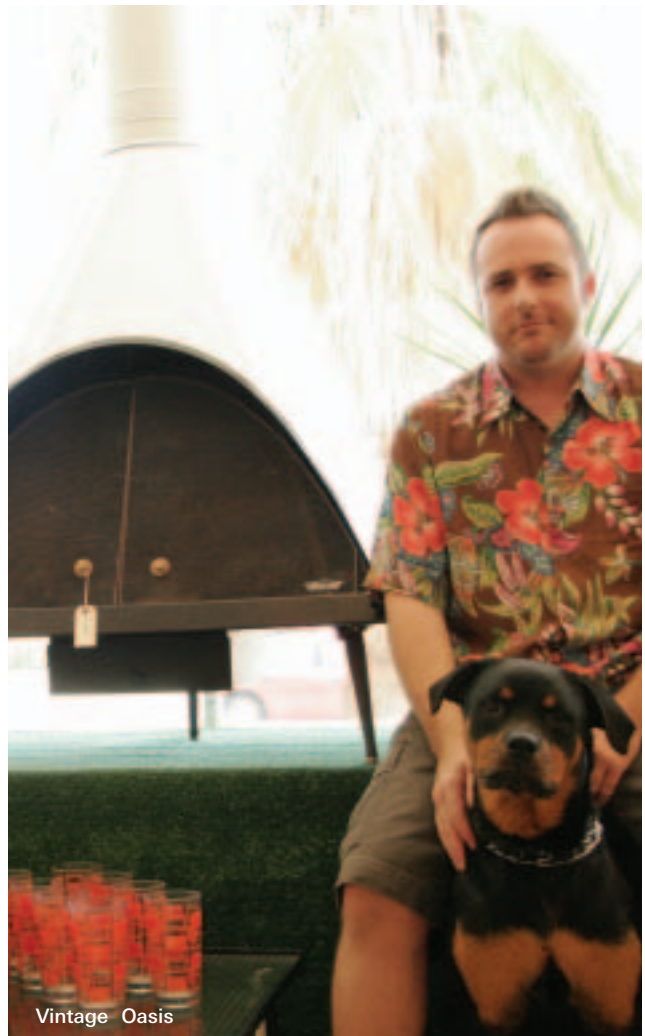
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### STUDIO ONE 11

**2675 N. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.323.5104**

Some vintage shops feel like showrooms or galleries; others feel like warehouses. Studio One 11 feels like home ... That is, if your home happens to be impeccably done up in pristine examples of authentic mid-century Modern design. Manager Will Raabe says, "We take great care in placing the items. When you walk in, it's like you walked into somebody's living room." Studio One 11 likes to stock what Raabe calls "stable items" — design icons from the '50s and '60s like George Nelson case goods, Florence Knoll tables, and Richard Schultz lounges. In addition to these, you'll find some rare and exotic designs as well — the sort of pieces you won't see on HGTV or in shelter magazines, but the sort of pieces around which you'll gladly redesign your entire home. Studio One 11 also promotes a handful of carefully selected local artists.



Vintage Oasis

### VINTAGE OASIS

**373 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, 760.778.6224**

The blurring of indoors and outdoors is a signature element of Modern architecture. Palm Springs is awash with examples, many of which are dotted with the iconic, simple, geometric planters produced by Architectural Pottery. These pots, first introduced in the '50s, have become highly-prized accessories in recent years and the place to find these little gems (along with a modest selection of furniture and lighting plus reasonably priced vintage clothing) is Vintage Oasis. Owner Trifon Trifonopoulos says they also carry some new pieces from Gainey Ceramics (the company that purchased Architectural Pottery in the '70s) that are not widely marketed, including some in the same unglazed bisque finish that was (and still is) so popular on the original Architectural Pottery pieces. ■