



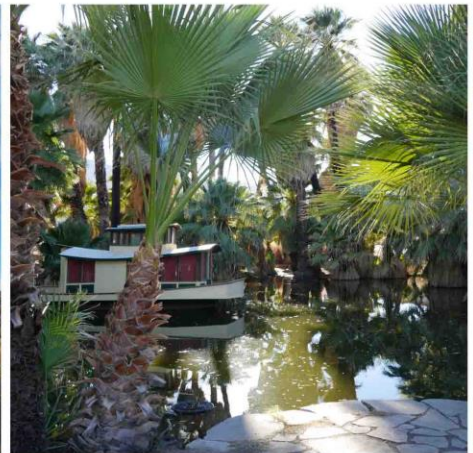
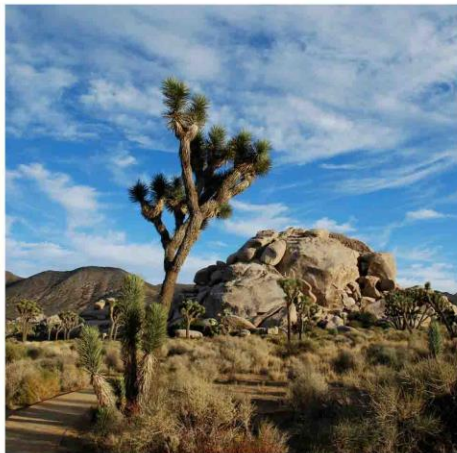
**Joshua Tree National Park with Palm Springs CA Trip Notes**  
**February 21-March 1, 2014**

***Why this trip?***

I needed something to do in the winter and hiking guide friend Nola needed something to do -- so off we went. We used her expertise and knowledge of the area and then also scouted and saw some new hiking trails that she might use next year when she guides through [www.ParksPlusHiking.com](http://www.ParksPlusHiking.com).

***Where to stay?***

It was tempting to stay at a Hampton or a Fairfield Inn until I saw this funky little historical hotel right at the edge of the Park and within an oasis. It looked like a 50s hippie village and it wasn't updated much more than that, but this was just what we wanted. I reserved The Guest House with two bedrooms. See [www.29palmsinn.com](http://www.29palmsinn.com).



*The 29 Palms Inn is situated on the 9,000 year old Oasis of Mara and surrounded by the vast Mojave Desert looking up to Joshua Tree National Park, California. It sits on a 70-acre property. Rather than be dazzled by man's accomplishments, you'll be bewildered by nature's. Promised to eat, sleep, and breathe better than you have in years; dedicated to the art of relaxation. Stay in an authentic 1930's Adobe Bungalow with a fireplace and sun patio, a 1920's Wood Frame Cabin with walk out decks and private backyards, or one of our large guesthouses. Although no two guest quarters are alike, all promise comfort, relaxation and beautiful desert views. Enjoy a drink by the pool. Dine at our restaurant. Explore our organic garden. Lounge with a good book in a hammock. Watch the sunset and contemplate the magnificent Milky Way. Explore your artistic side with a workshop at the on-site 29 Palms Inn Creative Center.*





The huge back yard was totally enclosed in by painted walls. See the shadow of the tree? It was painted on. See the mountain ranges? Painted on. The cathedral ceilings were lighted.



*The Guest House is the largest space at the 29 Palms Inn and can sleep up to 6 people comfortably. The first bedroom has one queen bed, and the second has a queen bed plus two singles and has a walk out to the private backyard. The spacious living room has a fireplace and a beautiful wood beam ceiling, a perfect space for family gathering. The full kitchen has a walk out to the backyard where there are patio seating 8, both for dining and for relaxing.*

### **The view**

As worked up by Nola the creative artist, here is the view from Thousand Palms. Yes, there was a “29 Palms at the Inn” where we stayed, and some in between views too, then the Thousand Palms area. We finally got to see snow on the mountain tops before we left.



### **Where to eat?**

There were endless possibilities and we needed more time but the “29 Palms Inn” restaurant was so much

The Best that we ate there three evenings. The menu was suitable for a big city and thus it filled up fast. This was our breakfast site too though when the hiking groups come here they are taken into town for a bigger feast. One evening we happily ate at a Mexican restaurant. Every lunch it was what we packed into our backpacks. That’s my style of eating.

Notes to Tom - At our first stop at Joshua tree we really lucked out with a lovely restaurant as part of the hotel complex. It was extremely busy and we needed to do dinner at more like 6pm but that suited as well. One night I had braised short ribs with a special mashed potatoes and vegetables and their famous sourdough bread. Another night I had pork tenderloin with a kind of European sauerkraut with baked apples. We had stuffed ravioli with some sort of mushroom interior and artichokes with a very spicy tomato sauce. Nola twice had a big salad that had a tender plank steak that was rare and cut in small pieces on the top. For our four morning breakfast there was just enough with boiled eggs and an uniquely tasty oatmeal that I couldn't identify that was fluffy, as well as breads and muffins with our favorite being a spicy pumpkin bread. When Nola brings a tour group here they take them down the street to a country kitchen that has a bigger breakfast. This was lots and plenty for us. One night we went into town and ate Mexican food at a larger sized Mexican restaurant run by a bunch of Mexicans. It was his good as I expected. Nola and Steve take their groups there.

***Hiking was the goal but living well wasn't to be skipped – photos from Nola***



***Panorama Trail with a lunch break.***

***Some hiking notes***

Getting there was easier than usual as I did manage to get into first class. Wasn't in until near midnight Friday and then up and out by 9am on Saturday. It was a five hour drive from Phoenix to Joshua Tree but with time difference we gained an hour. Since I had only left the Phoenix area about three days prior, it really was only a one hour body-clock difference.

We hiked a little over two hours on Forty Nine Palms trail to an oasis in 29 Palms. Maybe three miles round trip with something under 1000' up to about 3000 elevation. I didn't see any forty nine palms on that trail but I saw some huge ones which did give shade and made us wonder where all the water was coming from. Ended at the Visitor Center which is always interesting and got us some mementos and a good hiking map. Moved into 29 Palms Inn and had dinner at the hotel. It is such a lovely place and maybe one of the best restaurants in town. Tom would have been very pleased if not jealous when I had braised short ribs. Nola's meal was so good that two nights later we returned to have the same thing again.



***Windows/Maze Loop; Ryan Mountain Trailhead***





***Hiking into the Wonderland of Rocks  
Boy Scout trail, where we turned off to see the rock climbers.***

Sunday brought breakfast at 7:15am and then we were on the Boy Scout trail by 9:15 then turned off to Willow Hole in the Wonderland of Rocks and finally making a detour to Outback Mongolia to watch some rock climbers.

Monday took us first to Ryan Mountain which was a rather steep climb and my weight trainer would be proud of me finally getting a little cardio workout. Up on top was a great 360° panorama so I took a video. That was pretty steep and it took us a couple hours to do the mere 3 miles. It was near 6000 feet elevation at the top but we don't know if we were 3500 or 4000' at the start. We then headed off to a hike we had looked for the day before called Maze Loop and we added the Windows Loop to it. The Maze Loop gave us quite a bit of up-and-down so it wasn't flat like we expected. All in for the day we did something under 10 miles. These 10 miles were both straight up and straight down and some easy walking and quite a bit of a very thick deep sand which gave a different kind of work out. I like being tired and a little bit sore in the end of the day gave me what I wanted. Stayed out until about 2pm then headed back to town to take in the two art museums and/or art galleries. They were not worth very much time so we ended back to our lovely little Casita earlier than expected. I was insistent that I had some wonderful leftovers that I wanted to eat but Nola is not as hot about leftovers so she repeated her hotel meal that we liked so well. While I don't usually go to bed before midnight, surprise has been my being totally catatonic by 9pm. But I was up by 6:30am so I suppose that isn't quite as dead as being dead asleep. I always say you can sleep when you're dead and I worry that I indulge in too much death.

Tuesday - Up the usual early 6:30am but with breakfast and packing lunch that still means we aren't out until 8:30. The park is huge and we went over to the western side and went up Panorama Loop with about three hours of hiking then the side mountain and up to that peak. I was grateful when Nola suggested she was tired as I was too incited and thought we'd do a third hike. By the time we got back to the hotel my hips were like concrete.

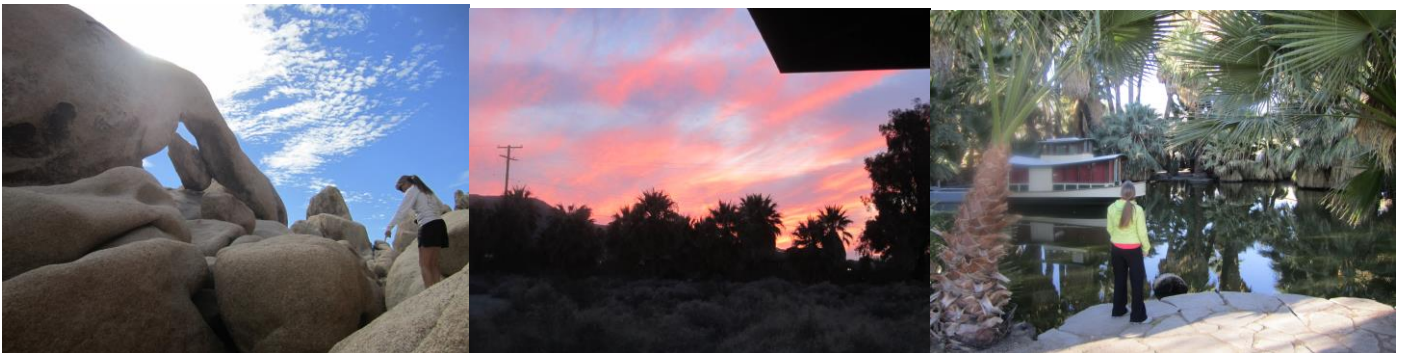
Oops there were no notes for Wednesday and Thursday was in the Palm Springs area and high up on a ledge in the strong wind where we had to hold on with our trekking poles until we hit a couple oasis and protection.

Friday brought the heavy rains that were headline national news but that was okay as we both like art museums. We went first out of town to Desert Hot Springs and a crazy man's oasis called Cabot's Museum before going to the main art museum. Eating downtown Palm Springs and finding a Trader Joe's too were odd highlights.

Saturday was time to move on: me to NJ and Nola to friends down south. She had a tough time finding roads open from the rain storms and I had the canceled flight but we both made our destinations plenty fine.



**Wonderland of Rocks; a Palm Oasis; Teddy Bear Cactus grove**



**Arch Rock; a sunset out of room patio; the Oasis at our hotel**



**Nola enjoying one of the many panoramas, well before we walked this ridge trail in the strong winds and with mixed emotions; the canyons were certainly more protected.**





**Ancient Weather Rock is just one of the humorous things at Cabot's Museum. It makes so much sense:**

*When Rock is wet, it's raining.  
When Rock is white, it's snowing.  
When Rock is hard to see, it's foggy.  
When Rock is moving, it's windy or there's an earthquake.  
Rock is never wrong.*

### **Cabot's Pueblo Museum - [www.cabotmuseum.org/](http://www.cabotmuseum.org/)**

*Nestled in the scenic hills of Desert Hot Springs, a Hopi-inspired pueblo sits against a hillside. Not just any pueblo, but one built with re-purposed materials he collected throughout the desert. Cabot's pueblo spreads an impressive 5,000 square feet, divided into 35 rooms and adorned with 150 windows and 65 doors. What a sight it is to see!*

*Through the tour, you will have the chance to get to know the man behind the pueblo: a bright and ambitious man, who followed his heart, traveled the world and accomplished countless things.*

*In a modern world where everything we need is at our fingertips with a touch of a button, a flick of a switch or the sound of a voice, it's hard to imagine having to walk 14 miles for water. Let us take you on a journey back to simpler times and introduce you to an exceptionally fascinating man, Cabot Yerxa.*

*The Pueblo - Cabot's Pueblo Museum is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places! Cabot Yerxa started building his Museum and home in about 1941 at the age of 57, although collecting the materials he needed to build the Pueblo started years before. The Hopi-inspired structure is hand-made, created from reclaimed and found materials Cabot was inspired as a young boy when he first saw a replica of a Southwest Indian pueblo at the Chicago World's Fair. Much of the material used to build the Pueblo was from abandoned cabins that had housed the men who built the California aqueduct in the 1930's. Cabot purchased these cabins and deconstructed them to build his Pueblo. The Pueblo is four-stories, 5,000 square feet and includes 35 rooms, 150 windows and 65 doors. Much of the Pueblo is made from adobe-style and sun-dried brick Cabot made himself in the courtyard. Cabot modified his formula and used a cup of cement rather than straw to make his bricks.*





In the art museum, I loved this full length dress in Lalique-like glass, plus this couple turned many heads: they are not real. We had a delightful docent tour and ate lunch in the museum too. Downtown Palm Springs for dinner had a different kind of art and at Matchbox it was certainly good food.

### **View in Palm Springs**

There was something good about all the rain even if they were monsoons. The view of snow on the mountains plus the opportunity to be a tourist in Palm Springs and see the museums.



### **Why hiking vs marathons?**

Running excuses! We can be so amusing. Here are some of the best and I've likely used most of them . . . . and I become near revolted when I hear others use them. With hikes there is no need for excuses as one just keeps moving - and eating - all day.

(I think I found the following in a trail runner magazine.)

1. *My Garmin says the course was 0.67 miles too long. I sure wish the race director had measured the course right. Running the unexpected distance destroyed my race.*
2. *I could have won if I'd actually trained. But, unlike others in this race, I've been really busy lately and just haven't had the time.*
3. *I didn't taper. Tapering is for road runners. I ran long yesterday, so my legs aren't feeling very lively today.*
4. *The weather is messing me up. It's too cold. My muscles won't warm up. The rain is slowing me down. It doesn't seem to be bothering anyone else, but that's probably because they have better rain gear than I do.*
5. *This non-ultramarathon was too short for me. I run 100-milers, you know? It takes me 40 miles to get warmed up.*
6. *My stomach is cramping. It's not that I'm bad at running; it's that my stomach is bad at digesting.*
7. *This is just a training run for me. So, I totally don't care how I do.*
8. *My legs hurt. My IT band is acting up. My calves are seizing on me. My quads and hamstrings are shot. If my legs didn't hurt so much, I'd be killing it at this race.*
9. *I got lost and ran extra miles. I don't mean to gloat, but ... I probably deserve the win, since I ran more than everyone else.*
10. *I'm better off DNF'ing. I'm running way below my ability level in this race, so my finishing time wouldn't accurately reflect what I'm capable of. I don't want to bring down my percentage on Ultra signup.*



11. *I wore the wrong shoes. This course is way muddier than it's supposed to be. With the right shoes, I would have smoked it.*
12. *This course is too flat. I train in the mountains. My legs love doing huge amounts of vert. This flat stuff is killing me.*
13. *The lead pack went out too fast. If they had paced themselves better, I wouldn't have blown up trying to stay with them.*
14. *I haven't been able to run outside much lately. I've been skiing all winter, so my legs are still in that mode.*
15. *I just signed up for this race yesterday. I'm spontaneous like that—so, of course I'm didn't do as well as these people who "trained" for the race. Training is for people who take themselves too seriously.*

## **Palm Springs**

I hadn't been in Palm Springs since the late 80s. The story of my first visit could fill pages but it had to do with work and the chairman of the company wanting to meet me and thus I was invited to his complex for a couple days where I stayed in his Guest Cottage. The next time was for a National Investor Relations conference when Tom accompanied me and we stayed in a luxurious resort with our own casita complete with an outdoor Jacuzzi and meals served via a golf cart.

## **The last day – water! Water everywhere but never enough**

It made national headlines since California so needed water but not the floods that we experienced. Roads were closed as the rains came down sideways. We didn't mind as we'd had a big hike the day before and we are both interested in art museums so that's basically where we spent the day.

*An amusing article entitled "Obama's Water Hazard" - President Obama traveled to California over Presidents' Day weekend to highlight the drought emergency, calling for shared sacrifice to help manage the state's worst water shortage in decades. He then spent the rest of his trip enjoying the hospitality of some of the state's top water hogs: desert golf courses.*

*Over three days, the Duffer in Chief played two of the most exclusive private courses in the Palm Springs area: the Sunnylands estate, built by publishing magnate Walter Annenberg, and Porcupine Creek, the 19-hole course owned by billionaire Oracle founder Larry Ellison.*

*Taken together, the 124 golf courses in the Coachella Valley consume roughly 17% of the region's water, and one-quarter of that is pumped out of its groundwater aquifer, according to the Coachella Valley water district. Statewide, roughly 1% of the state's water goes to keep fairways green. Each desert course, on average, uses nearly 1 million gallons a day in the hot and dry climate, three to four times the amount used by the average U.S. links.*

## **Getting home – more trauma at the airports but I was fine**

Rain in California Brings Relief, and New Problems - The downpours, as welcome as they were, will not rescue the state from its historically bad drought, officials said.

[www.nytimes.com/2014/03/01/us/winter-storm-brings-rain-and-new-troubles-to-a-dry-california.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/01/us/winter-storm-brings-rain-and-new-troubles-to-a-dry-california.html)

Do we call this lucky? Or call this unlucky? My travels were almost interrupted again. From snow to rain but again it turned out fine. Heavy rains meant that we became tourists instead of hikers on Friday. From the historic and crazy Cabot's hideaway in the desert in the morning to the big art museum with docent tours in the afternoon, we had a Good Friday after all. Ending the day with snacks and free booze at the manager's reception capped a plenty pleasant week of hiking and touring.

Then I had to wonder when I returned to my room, checked email, and found my flights had been canceled. But United came to the rescue and not only immediately booked me on a similar itinerary but also gave me first-class seating. My original itinerary had gone through San Francisco and those flights as well as some into Los Angeles were canceled. So now I have a more direct route through Denver. This arrives only a couple hours later at 11pm.



**Observations to Tom about Palm Springs** -- includes lots of old people, even more fatso, some perfect weather since it is winter time (except this freak rain that they severely needed) and lots of gloriously expensive sports cars. I didn't think I could ever see a place that had more restaurants than NYC but this does. Apparently the old folks eat out all the time.

The little airport is so small as to not have any club. It does have a lot of outdoor area so I can't imagine what they did with the wind and rain of Friday. It also has a Starbucks which is just absolutely racking in the money with a long line at all times.

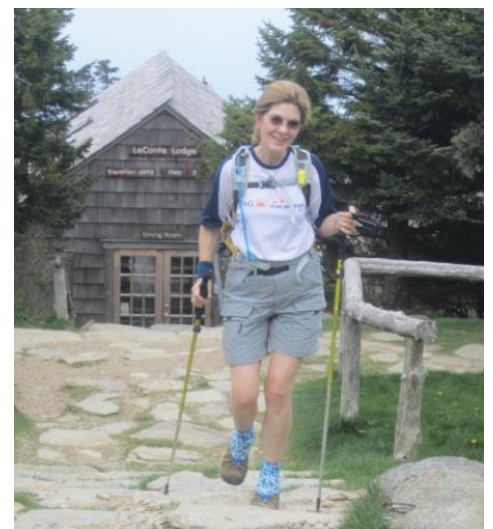
Compared to what I am accustomed to, the entire Palm Springs area seems very spread out. In all directions seem to be mountain ranges and today they are covered with snow. Joshua Tree National Park was about 30 to 40 miles away and it too is wildly expansive covering something like 800,000 acres and two different types of desert. Nola knew the hiking area which was a great boon for me but we also tried some new ones and some of the smaller more tourist hikes of about a mile and even a half-mile each. She hadn't seen Arch Rock or Porcupine Flats. She had seen and recommended Teddy Bear Grove which was most unique. Picture a bunch of cactuses all jammed in one area and they look like little fluffy teddy bears.

The hike on Thursday was one to remember. We were hiking along a high and narrow ridge that was quite narrow and steep on either side and we've been warned. What we didn't expect was the heavy wind where we really had to lock our trekking poles into the sand at each step so as not to be swept off the mountain. Finding the two groves of palm trees in what they call an oasis made it well worth the effort. It also meant going up and down a series of mountains. We were both a little bit extra tired and sore from the deep sands but the body healed quickly.

Next up I am home for a few days from Sunday until Thursday when we leave to Carolinas for both a trail half marathon, a reunion in Charlotte area, then Kings Mountain SC, then with koi friends in Flat Rock, NC.

### ***Timberline catalog***

Super – I showed up in their catalog and their recent newsletter. Only took 24 trips with them to finally show up? And now they are as much as defunct with all the good leaders and employees gone. But here I am, taken up at Conte high in the Smoky Mountains a couple years ago.



## ***Itinerary***

### **Fri Feb 21**

6:58pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#1635  
10:35pm Arrive Phoenix PHX – Note that Terminal 4 has a USO

Hotel free shuttle from airport – 2 miles from PHX and runs 24/7

Hotel Double Tree Suites by Hilton – 1 night  
230 North 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Phoenix, AZ 85008 Tele 602 225 0500  
2-room suite with sofa-bed; buffet breakfast

Meet up with Nola who knows that we only have one room and accepts the sofa bed; Hotel has credit card guarantee and Nola's name who only shows ID and will have access to the room.

From I-10, Exit 153A to AZ-143N towards Sky Harbor Airport. Take Exit 4 and turn left onto E Washington Street. Turn right onto N 44th St. Hotel will be on the left.

### **Sat Feb 22**

am Depart to Joshua Tree/29 Palms area – approx. 4 ½ hour via 1-10 or 280 miles

Hotel 29 Palms Inn – reserved the 2-bedroom Guest House  
73950 Inn Avenue, 29 Palms, CA 92277 Tele 760 367 3505

Hiking notes by Nola:

I think we can come up with 3-4 days of hikes out in J-Tree. Cottonwood area trails in the park are currently closed and sound like they might be for a while. I called the visitor center today. Bummer, they were neat. However, we could still do:

49 Palms Oasis -- shorter but neat. Just a couple hours here.

Ryan Mountain -- a small peak, very user friendly. Great hike, great views. Takes a few hours but not all day.

Lost Horse mine -- not as cool but shows fire and history in the park -- do if we want miles Panorama trail -- probably my favorite, a climb up to excellent views west. Network of trails NW area of park. It's around 6 miles(?) Boy Scout trail/Wonderland of Rocks -- an interesting hike near the awesome rock climbing areas. We did this as a one way but it is not necessary in order to enjoy this area.

Lost Horse Mine - [www.nps.gov/jotr/historyculture/lhmine.htm](http://www.nps.gov/jotr/historyculture/lhmine.htm)

### **Wed Feb 26**

Drive from Twentynine Palms to Palm Desert hotel 1:15 hours or 60 miles

Hotel Embassy Suites Palm Desert – 3 nights  
74-700 Highway 111, Palm Desert, CA 92260 Tele: 760 340 6600

Notes from Nola re PSP possible hikes:

Indian Gardens -- we did a half day hike here but there are more options

Go up the aerial tram if it is open – and snowshoes could be needed to explore at the top.



**Sat Mar 1**

? Depart from hotel in Palm Desert to airport 20-30 minutes or 12-15 miles  
10:27am Depart Palm Springs PSP via UA#5490  
12:02pm Arrive San Francisco SFO for plane change – 43 minutes connect  
  
12:45pm Depart San Francisco SFO via UA#586  
9:08pm Arrive Newark EWR

**Packing**

Extra backpack  
Cell Phone charger for car  
“Longest Road” book