

Arts Walk

An Artful Oasis in Palm Springs

There's more to this desert resort than golf and sun

By Sharon Apfelbaum

SOARING 10,000 RUGGED feet above Palm Springs, the San Jacinto Mountains create a scenic backdrop for this historic desert resort. Palm Springs lies 100 miles east and light years away from the Los Angeles metropolis. Native American Cahuilla Indians were first to enjoy its year-round sunny days, healing hot springs and cool, palm-rimmed oases. Early pioneers and Hollywood celebrities have left their own legacy.

Visitors today enjoy the

town's casual yet cosmopolitan atmosphere, especially when strolling Palm Canyon Drive, a mile-long ribbon of main street indented by flower-filled courtyards and fringed with an eclectic mix of galleries, boutiques and cafes.

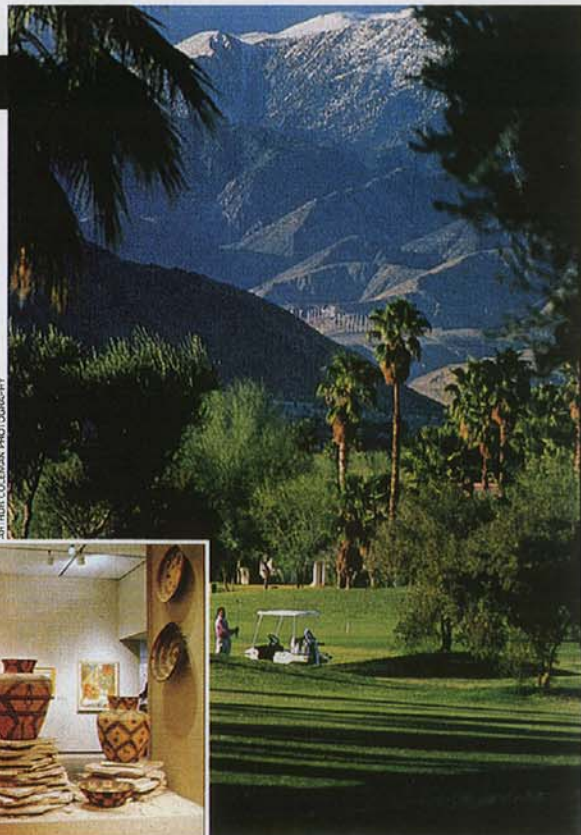
"Palm Springs is a unique environment," says downtown development director Jerry Ogburn. "What has evolved is an arts and entertainment district an-

chored by theater. Our centerpiece is the Desert Museum (101 Museum Drive, 760-325-7186) and the Annenberg Theater."

The museum makes a good central point for beginning an art lover's tour. Set stunningly against the mountains, this handsome fine art, natural science and performing arts facility is an architectural landmark.

Modern and contemporary art is showcased in the Steve Chase Art Wing, a handsome addition that opened last year. You can view works from glass artist Dale Chihuly's dramatic 1996 museum exhibition on the third floor. Exhibits change, but elsewhere in the museum you

La Mariposa offers artful clothing and decorative items like Linda Zeiser's clay sun worshiper at far left. Inspired by primitive dolls, it is dressed in handwoven clothing and trinket beads.



Now a sportsman's paradise, Palm Springs was first home to many Native American artisans, whose works can be seen at the Palm Springs Desert Museum.



Writer Sharon Apfelbaum specializes in travel, food and art. She lives in Palm Springs.

