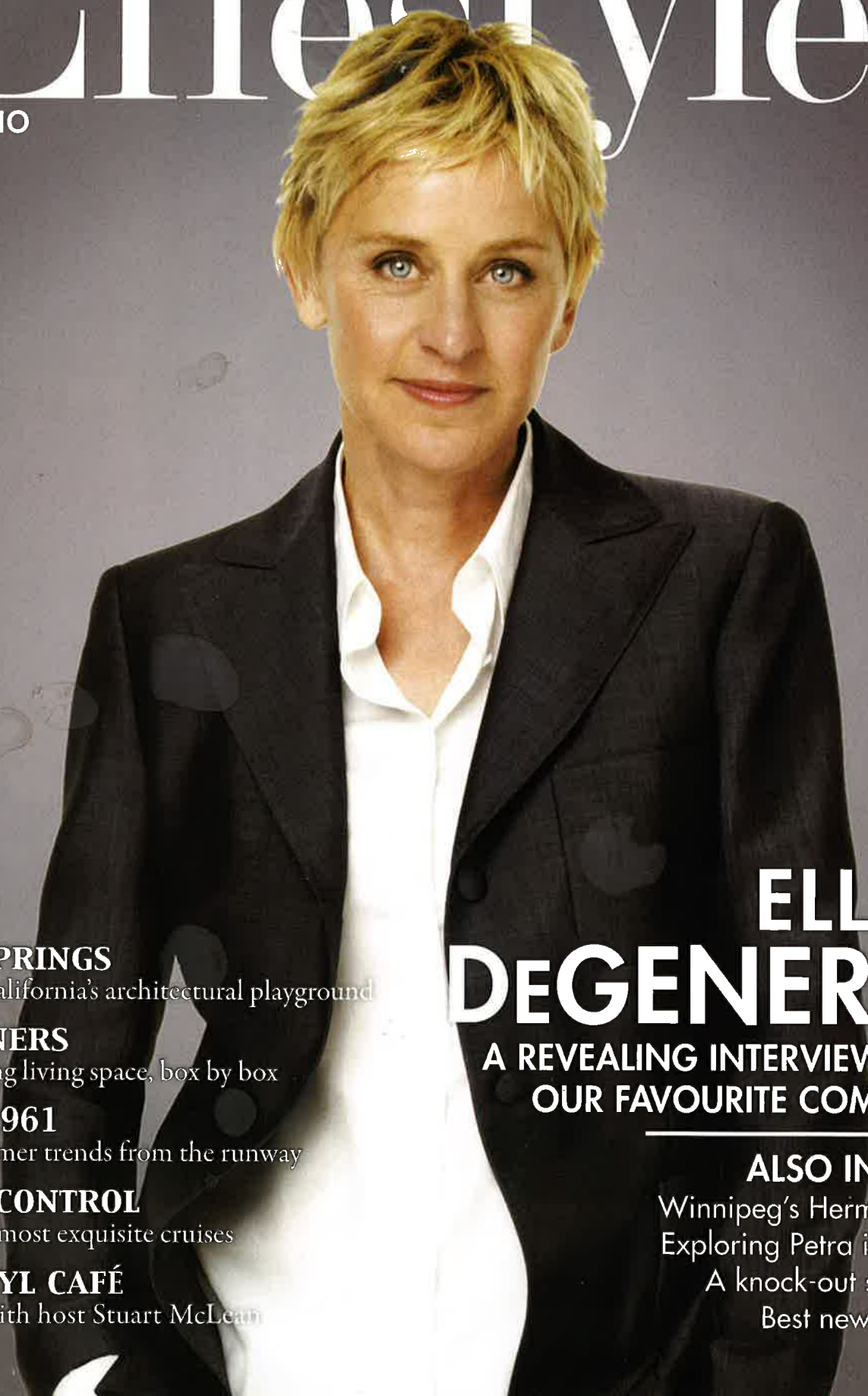


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Twin Palms



Sunnylands Historic Estate


— though of quite a different nature than those of Sunnylands — is Frank Sinatra's Twin Palms, the star's desert escape until 1957. Located in the Movie Colony of Palm Springs, and named after the two tall palms at the front of the house (at one point the tallest trees in the valley), Twin Palms is another prime example of mid-century modern architecture. Designed by E. Stewart Williams and built in 1947, Twin Palms was the architect's first residential commission. Although Ol' Blue Eyes was looking for an authentic Georgian-style mansion with all the dressings — a brink façade and column, to name a couple — Williams was successful in luring Sinatra towards a more "desert-appropriate" style instead, featuring long horizontal lines and building materials of a non-traditional nature.

Arguably one of the most renowned structures of mid-century modern architecture is the Kaufmann House by 20th-century modernism "pillar" Richard Neutra. The house was built in 1946 for the family of Edgar J. Kaufmann Sr., the man who commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design Fallingwater in Pennsylvania. Described by historian Esther McCoy as "horizontal planes resting on horizontal planes hover[ing] over transparent walls," the Kaufmann House is considered one of Neutra's greatest works. Featuring characteristic sliding glass walls and built using glass, steel and stone, it was

Kaufmann's until his death in 1955.

In 2008, the house was put up for auction. The owners had performed extensive and meticulous renovations, aiming to restore the iconic modernist property and encourage the public to consider architecture as a form of collectible art.

During the mid-20th century, Palm Springs was a playground for Hollywood's brightest stars: A quiet, temporary hideaway from the paparazzi-ridden Hills. Where the stars came to play, architects and builders came to design and build and today, people come to enjoy. The city has a knack for making visitors feel as though they've travelled back to that time, when Sinatra, reeling in the decadence of his new success, hosted the Rat Pack for an evening of indulgence at Twin Palms, while the Annenbergs discussed politics with President Eisenhower at Sunnylands.

And even then, while Alexander home after Alexander home was being built, the reliable mountains stood by in their stoic grace, playing witness to history being made below. And just as they stood tall to greet you upon your arrival, they bid you farewell as you leave. Like a post-script for Palm Springs, they somehow whisper, "We await your return." 

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