

Palm Springs region offers plenty to do and lots of accessibility

by *Alexandra Cohen*

Close your eyes. Imagine a place with palm tree-lined streets, beautiful summer weather in the spring and fall, resorts, golfing, hiking, shopping and more. For many years, I had heard such wonderful things about The Greater Palm Springs region, and when I finally had the opportunity to travel there myself, it absolutely lived up to the hype.

Where to stay

During my time in Palm Springs, I had the great pleasure of staying at The Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa, a beautiful resort in Indian Wells, which is conveniently nestled between the Palm Desert and La Quinta regions, just at the foot of the Santa Rosa Mountains. It is adjacent to the Indian Wells Golf Resort.

There are two swimming pools – one with a fountain and the other with zero-entry – and a sandy beach, as well as two hot tubs. There is plenty of seating. My travel partner and I enjoyed a lovely day in a cabana, which comes with couches, a television, water and a large fruit platter. We also ordered drinks and lunch from the tasty and diverse pool menu. The service was truly top-notch.

The hotel has accessible on-site parking, a self-operating lift and a sloped entry into the swimming pools. Service animals are welcome. All hotel entrances are accessible. Handicap-equipped guest rooms have accessible vanities, an adjustable height hand-held shower wand, alarm clock tele-

phone ringers, bathtub grab rails, a bathtub seat, closed caption TV and flashing door knockers. Guests in mobility-accessible rooms may inquire about lowering the bed height, hearing accessible rooms and/or kits, roll-in showers and toilet seats at wheelchair height.

Hotel dining

We started off our dining experiences in the Greater Palm Springs region at our own hotel, first, at The Place Lobby Bar, which offers an extensive and creative cocktail menu, as well as many light bites. Both indoor and outdoor seating are available. The second restaurant that we tried at the Renaissance Esmeralda was Cava, which is on the terrace level with a patio adjacent to the swimming pools. Cava has different menus available for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Dining out

We also ventured beyond the front doors of our hotel to experience what some of the neighbouring regions had to offer. I highly recommend visiting Pacifica Seafood Restaurant during your trip. Their fine dining menu focuses on their selection of fresh seafood, as well as their hand-crafted cocktails and award-winning wine list. The entry and patio are fully accessible.

Arnold Palmer's Restaurant, named after the late and legendary pro golfer, remains a staple in the La Quinta area. The menu features some of Palmer's favourites, including fresh seafood, aged beef and a variety of comfort foods. The daily specials are also frequently evolving, some of which we enjoyed during our visit. To start, we had a Hamachi appetizer, which was one of the



The Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa

specials and was incredibly light and fresh. The restaurant is single level and is ADA compliant (regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act).

Accessible options

When you aren't relaxing at a hotel pool or playing a round of golf, there are plenty of other activities to consider during your visit to Palm Springs. The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway is the world's largest rotating tram car with accessible entry. The Living Desert, home to over 500 animals representing over 150 species, provides guests with sensory processing needs, such as sensory bags containing special KultureCity VIP badges, fidget tools, noise-canceling headphones and other resources available for checkout.

Monoculars are offered to aid sight-impaired guests. The Palm Springs Art Museum offers sign language inter-

preters on an as-needed basis. At the Palm Springs Air Museum, pre-arranged group tours can be accommodated with accessibility features any day of the week between 10 am and 3 pm. The tours are guided by knowledgeable individuals, typically veterans and former pilots.

Palm Springs International Airport also offers a variety of services for passengers with disabilities. The first row of parking nearest to the terminal building provides spaces for drivers with disabilities. For those with disabilities who are traveling alone, you need only pull up curbside to receive assistance. Wheelchair service can be arranged in advance, in which case porters can take you directly to your gate. ■

For more info:

www.visitgreaterpalmsprings.com