

1925 – Daily Train Visitors, Desert Tourism Bring Prosperity to Oasis Palms

Amid the raucous revelry of the Roaring Twenties, Oasis Palms found itself basking in a newfound era of prosperity. With the train chugging into town daily, a fresh wave of visitors washed ashore, allured by the town's dry, hot climate, which purportedly bestowed health benefits. These sun-seekers flocked to Oasis Palms, yearning to bask in its radiant warmth, luxuriate in its hot springs, and gaze upon the sprawling vistas of the eastern desert. The town's soaring popularity translated into a perpetual occupancy for the Oasis Palms Hotel, the quaint Hotel California nestled in town, and the boarding rooms perched above various businesses in the area. From October to March each year, accommodations were in such high demand that vacancies were virtually nonexistent.




Prohibition was in effect from 1920 until 1933, but with the newly created Route 66 running through the Mojave desert there was an all-weather road that made the transportation of illegal alcohol from Mexico to Oasis Palms possible virtually all year long.

During this time, billboards were erected in Amboy and Danby to encourage travelers to make the 10-mile journey off of the Main Street of America to visit Oasis Palms. When travelers arrived they found an oasis in the desert and a wide-open drinking town.

While the rest of America became ensnared by the grip of [Prohibition](#), Oasis Palms enjoyed a remarkable exemption— it was magically drenched in wine, beer, tequila, whiskey, and

gin. Prohibition, in force from 1920 to 1933, failed to stifle the spirits of Oasis Palms, thanks in no small part to Curtis Smith (1874-1954). The ingenious son of Emmet held a unique role in the Prohibition era that would forever change the fortunes of Oasis Palms. A pharmacist by trade, Curtis uncovered the elusive key to circumvent the strict liquor ban of the time: medicinal alcohol.

Recognizing the potential of this legal loophole, Curtis and his wife Dr. Mary Smith orchestrated a brilliant plan. Within the lobby of the Hotel California, nestled in downtown Oasis Palms, Mary opened a doctor's office where she could discretely and conveniently see patients suffering from anxiety or depression. For a mere \$3 fee, individuals could undergo a thorough medical evaluation, and if the doctor, in her wisdom, diagnosed them with anxiety or depression, a prescription for medicinal liquor was provided. To promote their health spa business, both the Hotel California and Oasis Palms Hotel & Resort Spa guests were granted a waiver for the doctor's fee. Thus turning the hotels into tantalizing locations for those seeking rest and relaxation while recovering from their "ailments".



Bottled in Bond for Medicinal Use

The Medicinal Liquor Prescriptions Act of 1933 established limitations for physicians possessing a permit to dispense medicinal liquor.

Passed in March 1933 the law abolished the use of the medicinal liquor prescription form bringing an end to the legal loophole that kept liquor flowing in Oasis Palms during most of the 1920s. Nine months later in December 1933 Prohibition ended.

ORIGINAL
LIQUOR PRESCRIPTION STUB

E378812 Jan 14 1924
DATE PRESCRIBED

Rudolph Valenzino
FULL NAME OF PATIENT

1436 Bella Drive
ADDRESS
NUMBER STREET

Beverly Hills Calif.
CITY STATE

Anxiety and Depression
AILMENT FOR WHICH PRESCRIBED

Grain Liquor
KIND AND QUANTITY OF LIQUOR PRESCRIBED

Mary A Smith M.D.
SIGN FULL NAME M.D.

9 Main Street
ADDRESS
NUMBER STREET

Oasis Palms Calif. 27901
CITY STATE PERMIT NUMBER

97

ORIGINAL
PRESCRIPTION FORM FOR MEDICINAL LIQUOR

E378812

R Grain Liquor Indefinite with Meals
KIND OF LIQUOR QUANTITY DIRECTIONS

Rudolph Valenzino Jan 14 1924
FULL NAME OF PATIENT DATE PRESCRIBED

1436 Bella Drive Beverly Hills Calif.
PATIENTS ADDRESS
NUMBER STREET CITY STATE

Mary A Smith 27901
PRESCRIBER'S SIGNATURE PRESCRIBER'S PERMIT NUMBER

9 Main Street Oasis Palms Calif.
PRESCRIBER'S ADDRESS
NUMBER STREET CITY STATE

Smith Drug
CANCELED DRUG STORE NAME AS ON PERMIT PERMIT NUMBER

3 Jan Jan 14 1924 1005
DISPENSED SIGNATURE DATE FILLED AND CANCELED STRIP STAMP NUMBER

9 Main Street Oasis Palms Calif.
STORE ADDRESS
NUMBER STREET CITY STATE

97

DR. MARY A SMITH & BOTTLED IN BOND

MEDICINAL LIQUOR WAS THE FAMILY BUSINESS IN OASIS PALMS DURING PROHIBITION

Dr. Smith's prescriptions could be conveniently filled at

various establishments throughout town, each strategically placed to cater to the patrons' desires. Both the hotel restaurants, the pool hall above the ice cream shop, the diner, and even the frosty stand on the edge of town, featured a pharmacy counter, discreetly dispensing the "medicinal" elixirs of choice. Oasis Palms had ingeniously transformed into a haven of legal libations, offering an assortment of intoxicating concoctions. The downtown area of Oasis Palms flourished in response to this burgeoning demand.