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Sunnylands celebrates 50th anniversary of completion of famed Annenberg estate

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Sunnylands

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The Annenberg Retreat at [Sunnylands](#) has launched a celebration for its 2015-2016 season to mark 50 years since the late **Walter and Leonore Annenberg** opened their famed Mid-Century Modern estate, [Sunnylands](#), in 1966 in [Rancho Mirage](#), Calif.

The 200-acre Sunnylands, with its spacious



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25,000-square-foot residence, was the winter home of billionaire Walter and Leonore Annenberg. Now a high-level **retreat center**, Sunnylands is renowned for its architecture, interior design, art collection, and the myriad Hollywood and sports celebrities, presidents, royalty, Supreme Court justices, business leaders and other dignitaries who visited the Annenbergs.

The anniversary coincides with Sunnylands' plans to begin construction of a new archives building to house the Annenbergs' art and artifacts. Sunnylands invited the public with a personal history with Sunnylands to share their stories and mementos, their names to be registered in the archives.

Sunnylands is hosting multiple 50th anniversary events.

The celebration kicked off Sept. 24, the season's opening day. Visitors received a free, custom-designed commemorative pin featuring the home's iconic pink roof. The next day, Sunnylands showed "Oceans 11" on its great lawn, the first of three films scheduled to be screened this fall starring Frank Sinatra, the

Annenbergs' friend and neighbor, whose centennial birthday is Dec. 12.

Other happenings are:

- “Day of the Dead” activities and art installations in conjunction with CV Days of Los Muertos in late October and early November.
- Reception with Eisenhower Medical Center to mark its 45th anniversary and Sunnylands’ 50th.
- Opening in January of “Asian Artists in Crystal: Steuben Glass at Sunnylands.”
- Community event in the spring to commemorate the completion of Sunnylands and the welcoming of its first guests.

Walter Annenberg published the Philadelphia Inquirer and created Seventeen magazine and TV Guide. The Annenbergs both served as ambassadors, Walter to the Court of St. James in the United Kingdom and Leonore as chief of protocol (an ambassador rank) for the U.S. He sold his company for \$3.2 billion, and used the proceeds to establish The Annenberg Foundation, funding educational and cultural causes.

The Annenbergs bought their desert property in 1963. Architect A. Quincy Jones designed the home with expansive floor-to-ceiling windows. In the atrium is an original bronze casting of Rodin’s “Eve.” Digital reproductions of the Annenbergs’ Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces line the walls (they long ago donated the originals to the Metropolitan Museum of Art). Furniture is Hollywood Regency style. They avidly collected Chinese porcelain, Steuben glass and Battersea boxes.

The lush grounds feature a nine-hole golf course, olive grove, manmade lakes, guest buildings, and statuary (including a totem pole on the golf course to aid aiming).

The Annenbergs made their home available to leaders and the elite not only for R&R, but also for conversation, conferences and camaraderie, earning Sunnylands the unofficial title of “Camp David of the West.” Continuing in that vein following their deaths, The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands opened The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands, hosting high-level conferences, seminars, and retreats of national importance.

The 50th anniversary of Sunnylands offers a rare opportunity to learn more about and experience this renowned historic home.

When you go

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