# Tony Otten HOUSEGUY

## DESERT SKIES



Desert Skies 1959

Desert Skies is a historic 38-unit midcentury condominum complex in South Palm Springs. It was built in 1958 and developed by Roy Fey. Located at 2290 S Palm Canyon Dr, it was among the frst to be converted into condominiums, helping shape the area's popular, low-density residential, resort-style living with iconic amenities.

Roy Fey, a prominent developer who moved to Palm Springs from Chicago in 1956, began converting his struggling resort, the Desert Skies Apartment Hotel, into co-operative apartments similar to ones that were begining to pop up in urban areas such as New York City and Chicago. The condominium movement began locally when Fey transferred sole ownership of the Desert Skies Apartment Hotel to his wife, Ethel. He sold the complex to her in 38 separate transactions and each one had its own deed of sale according to county records. Fey sold each unit to her for $9,100. Thirty-eight units in the apartment complex were converted into co-ops.




Desert Skies Apartment Hotel

They went on sale in the summer of 1963 and were advertised as "Own Your Own" furnished apartments. The prices started at $14,495. Desert Skies was the first of many projects that Fey undertook during the 1960s, a period of phenomenal growth in the city of Palm Springs.

At the time, condominiums were such rare beasts that there were no state statutes nor laws governing such a conversion. Fey even had to draw up his own documents and forms. In a Palm Springs Life article, Fey talked about his first sale at Desert Skies and said, "When I went to the city to file the forms, the officials said, 'What are you talking about? Condominium? How do you spell it?' There was a big article on the front page of the Desert Sun shortly after that read 'ROY FEY RAPES LAND' because we altered the density ratio by taking what was normally three to the acre and making it five to the acre.


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