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Martin's 'Underpants' may extend Geffen stay

By [ARMY ARCHERD](#)

GOOD MORNING: Steve Martin's "The Underpants" at the Geffen Playhouse in Westwood is almost sold out and will be held over to April 25 -- and maybe longer; the theater's next ventures are skedded to play the Brentwood, so "Underpants" could hold at the Geffen if the scheduled revamp is postponed. Meanwhile, the comedy romp continues to boast a hefty celeb turnout following the preem night's stellar audience. Martin is next skedded to start in "The Birth of the Pink Panther," taking over the Inspector Clouseau role made famous by Peter Sellers in Blake Edwards' classic. Edwards was at the opening night because he and wife Julie Andrews got the invite from the play's Meredith Patterson, who costars with Julie in the recently wound "Princess Diaries II" and starred for director Andrews in "The Boy Friend" at the Bay Street Theater -- which is awaiting a move to B'way ... Blake said Martin sent him a note thanking him for coming to his play. And talking about "Pink Panther," I asked Blake if he has any involvement with the new edition, which will be directed by Shawn Levy ("Cheaper By The Dozen") for MGM. "I'm not sure," he said, "but I've spoken with MGM; they were thinking about changing the look of the Pink Panther cartoon character. That would have to be OK'd by me, Walter Mirisch and David H. De Patie. We own the cartoon animation rights" ... The "Sunset Blvd." Actors Fund benefit April 4 adds Lauren Ambrose of "Six Feet Under" in the role of Betty; she joins the previously announced Anjelica Houston, Ben Kingsley, Noah Wylie, Charles Durning, Steve Guttenberg, Ed Begley Jr., Marisa Jaret Winokur and Stefanie Powers. Peter Hunt directs.

PALM SPRINGS HAS CHANGED in many ways, I discovered on my annual visit last weekend. First of all, real estate is booming. Anyone who owns anything has found its value at least doubled in the past year. And Palm Springs, which was becoming a ghost town with everything moving to Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage and La Quinta, is now building and rebuilding in the heart of town. Business is as hot as the temperature (over 100 over the weekend). Adding to the heat is the Spa Resort Casino in the heart of downtown Palm Springs, owned by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. When I visited the casino (which is adjacent to the Spa Resort Hotel), it was packed, with every table and every slot machine occupied (not by me!). Employees bragged to me about how happy they are working for the Agua Caliente Tribe. The tribe employs 2,400 people, said Dick Taylor, who runs a production company in the desert. (Taylor is no stranger to

Hollywood, where he was CEO for Rogers & Cowen and later with Hill & Knowlton, where he handled accounts including Ford Motor Co. for 23 years) ... The Spa already has two great restaurants and entertainment in its Cascade Lounge, with more planned in its expansion: The Tribal Council has long-range plans for more glamorous additions and a redo of the Spa Resort Hotel ... The \$95 million gaming facility opened to an invited-only crowd of 4,500 guests on Nov. 17, 2003, to a musical extravaganza on a giant stage across the street from the casino. Taylor created and produced the opening night show, which featured Natalie Cole, "American Idol's" Ruben Studdard, a special appearance by Richard Thomas, Dale Kristien, flying acrobats, a chorus line, and singers. Congresswoman Mary Bono spoke at the opening, noting, "Sonny (Bono) always wanted to bring back the glitz and glamour to Palm Spring and tonight has done it -- wow -- we're back, Palm Springs" ... Taylor's production company also produced a half-hour ad-vertisement -- a la news mag which ran 31 times in five days on the several of the desert's Time-Warner channels. The show features Palm Springs mayor Ron Oden and Tribal chairman Richard Milanovich describing plans by the Tribe for undeveloped land urging the City Council to approve. Sure, the Tribe owns it all on its sovereign land, but they want to cooperate in proper development in cooperation with the city's Planning Commission ... As for Arnold Schwarzenegger's hope to gain taxes from the Indian tribes' sovereign land casino profits, they are working on a ballot initiative to support that tax in exchange for an increase in the number of gaming tables and machines beyond the current 2,000 per tribe. Meanwhile, the Agua Caliente have been making multi-million-\$ contributions to locals, the fire and police departments, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.

A VISIT TO PALM SPRINGS would not be complete without a visit to "The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies," now in its 13th edition. Preparations are underway for the 14th edition to bow on Election Day in November; it's titled "Give Em What They Want" and Buddy Greco will be the initial guest star ... The current show is "Hooray For Hollywood," guest starring Peggy March. But of course, the stars of the shows are always the showgirls (!), their fantastic costumes and the ringleader, producer, writer, comedian Riff Markowitz, who leaves no stone unturned. No one escapes his on-point humor, no one -- not one member of the audience, no religious group, the heavily gay Palm Springs community, straights, even the Indians. He says "Those savages were able to build a \$95 million casino in 11 months while I've been waiting for years just to get a permit to enlarge my kitchen!"

"WHEN DO WE EAT," which has just wrapped lensing, is set around the Passover Seder table. Writer-director Salvador Litvak tells me the important message may come from the one Gentile at the table (as played by Lynda Williams of "One False Move"). Producer Steven J. Wolfe says the pic proves that all families of all faiths are basically alike. The pic stars Jack Klugman as the patriarch, Michael Lerner as his son and Lesley Ann Warren. Plus Adam Lambert and Shiri Appleby. Klugman says he's anxious to hit the road with his one-man show and will appear with Charles Durning at a gala for Tony Randall's National Actors Theater on April 26. Klugman, who will be 82 in April, says "I love to work."

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