



Paulette Goddard and Evelyn Keyes
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LEFT: During his marriage to Ava Gardner, Frank Sinatra spent a lot of time at his Palm Springs house, Twin Palms, the site of some of the couple's most legendary fights.

BELOW: Jane Wyman and Ronald Regan spent some honeymoon time in 1940 at the El Mirador Hotel.



'LOVE AND MARRIAGE'

History of Hollywood stars who tied knot in desert

Tracy Conrad Special to The Desert Sun | USA TODAY NETWORK

When a friend asked theater impresario Mike Todd in 1954 when he was going to marry Evelyn Keyes he reportedly answered, "It takes two to tango." In 1955 the paper noted, "Mike Todd's comment on his most frequent companion, Evelyn Keyes, 'She's not only beautiful - she's so comfortable to be with.'" • Keyes was apparently comfortable and confident enough to refuse to marry Todd. He found a willing bride in Elizabeth Taylor, who would infamously marry eight times to seven men, (marrying Richard Burton twice.) It was both 49-year-old Todd's and 24-year-old Taylor's third marriage, exchanging vows in 1957, in Mexico, in a ceremony performed by the mayor of Acapulco with Mario Moreno, better known as Cantinflas, standing up as their witness. The pair were famously photographed with in Palm Springs just after, enjoying a sunny honeymoon, Cantinflas in tow.

A decade before her fling with Todd, Keyes was in the desert about to be married. "Evelyn Keyes, film actress who spent much of her time last week sunning herself and relaxing at the Palm Springs Tennis Club went from Palm Springs directly to Hollywood where on Saturday night she was married to Charles Vidor, motion picture director at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Pereira. While at the Tennis club last week she posed for several pictures for magazines."

Celebrity parties and celebrations, perhaps of the nuptials, were numerous that year, "when Frank Sinatra held open house at his Tamarisk home...his weekend guests were the Humphrey Bogarts...this was a very informal affair...with guests in shorts...but included a buffet and music by the Guadalajara Boys. At the party were Mike and Gloria Romanoff, Danny Kaye, Noel Coward, King Vidor (he was beating the drums,) Evelyn Keyes, Jimmy Van Heusen..."

Van Heusen's tune "Love and Marriage," famously sung by Sinatra wouldn't begin to capture the swirling, merry-go-round, musical chairs of changing marital partners that the desert would witness.

Ginger Roger and Jacques Bergerac snuck off to La Quinta after their surprise wedding in Palm Springs in 1953. Jane Wyman and Ronald Regan spent some honeymoon time in 1940 at the El Mirador Hotel. Natalie Wood and Robert Wagner were photographed in the late 1950s after the first time they married at the El Mirador Hotel. They divorced and remarried each other again, like Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

And Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh make the list due to his impressive six marriages, with the first being to Janet Leigh where they lived at "Camp Curtis" in Palm Springs with their two young daughters. His affair with Marilyn Mon-

roe may have had something to do with the failure of the marriage.

Elvis and Priscilla Presley's honeymoon shone the spotlight on the desert almost as never before. On May 2, 1967, The Desert Sun ran a story about the newly wed couple, "Presley, 32, surrendered his bachelorhood Monday when he slipped a 21-stone diamond ring on the finger of 22-year-old Priscilla Ann Beaulieu in wedding ceremony at a posh Las Vegas, Nev., strip hotel. The newlyweds flew here Monday night to begin their honeymoon...when newsmen asked the swivel-hipped forerunner of the Beatles why he decided to end his status as one of the most eligible bachelors in Hollywood, Presley replied: 'It was about time.' The singer-entertainer apparently suffered the butterflies common to most bridegrooms during the eight-minute ceremony. When a photographer asked him to smile during a news conference following the wedding, Presley said, 'How can you look happy when you're scared?'"

Rightfully scared, as celebrity love and marriage often went awry.

The most popular singer in the world before Presley was Sinatra and his example wasn't reassuring. During his marriage to Ava Gardner, Sinatra spent a lot of time at his Palm Springs house, Twin Palms, the site of some of the couple's most legendary fights. The most publicized one involved another Hollywood luminary, Gardner's good friend and Sinatra's former lover, Lana Turner who was witness to Gardner throwing Sinatra's possessions out of the front door, a story that played heavily in the press just like the chink in the bathroom sink caused by a smashed champagne bottle.

Sinatra and Artie Shaw had more than music in common. Shaw was a serial bridegroom, marrying eight times! Among his brides were Lana Turner, Ava Gardner and Evelyn Keyes.

Gardner recalled years later that Turner "was in an Andy Hardy film with (Mickey Rooney, Gardner's first husband) ... First Mick, then Artie ... Lana beat me to both of them. And to Frank, too. Even so, I liked her. We became good friends."

Shaw clearly knew a thing or two about marriage when he was quoted by Nancy Anderson in 1974, "If you have a choice between marrying a dull woman and a fascinating one, you naturally marry the fascinating one, and I married the best I could get. And I imagine they did the same because they had other chances."

Shaw was a virtuoso clarinetist, composer, bandleader, writer and sometime actor, "but his talents don't begin to stop there. He's a gifted conversationalist, a versatile businessman and was Lana Turner's first husband. And as if that weren't enough, he's also been married to Ava Gardner, Kathleen Winsor, Margaret Allen, Elizabeth Kern, Doris Dowling and Evelyn Keyes, who currently retains his name if not his person." Shaw explained that he and Keyes liked each other well enough but unlike Mike Todd's notion of Keyes being comfortable to be around, Shaw said he and Keyes couldn't stand living together.

Keyes had her fair share of marriages, namely four, including to King Vidor and John Huston. She had countless liaisons and proposals as detailed in her autobiography. But she refused to marry Mike Todd.

Despite not being able to stand living together, Keyes would stay married to Shaw for almost three decades. Constantly questioned on the subject of his many famous wives, Shaw quipped "All my marriages were mistakes. My divorces were brilliant."

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