



FRED MOSER AND KELLY LEE

## Q&A A Classic Moment By the Pool

▶ No doubt you've seen the photo. Two attractive women sit in lounge chairs beside a teal-blue pool, looking fabulous and moneyed. A third, all legs and carefree attitude, strides toward them with a drink in her hand. In the background is a modern glass-and-stone house and purplish mountains. The landscape is idyllic. The sunlight is hazy and golden. You would live inside the photo if you could.

"Poolside Gossip," taken by the society photographer Slim Aarons at the Kaufman House in Palm Springs, Calif., has become as much a symbol of modernism as the Richard Neutra home that was its setting. Open a few shelter magazines and you're likely to come across the photo hanging in someone's house — a piece of hip retro décor like the Barcelona chair or the lacquer Parsons desk.

To celebrate "Poolside Gossip," the organizers of Palm Springs Modernism Week, the annual event that runs through Feb. 22 this year, recently arranged for two of the women in the photo to return to the Kaufman House: Nelda Linsk, who owned the home when the photo was taken, and Helen Kaptur, who was married for many years to the mid-century architect Hugh Kaptur. (The third woman, walking alongside the pool, was Lita Baron, an actress.)

Ms. Linsk and Ms. Kaptur were also to be the featured guests at "Poolside Gossip: An Evening



The organizers of Palm Springs Modernism Week invited Nelda Linsk (in red) and Helen Kaptur (in yellow), above, to return to the Kaufman House recently for the 45th anniversary of the photograph "Poolside Gossip," as seen in the 2015 program, left. The photo, shot in 1970 by Slim Aarons, became a symbol of modernism.

our house was a Neutra. He said: "I want to come over and do a pool shot. Call some friends over."

It was so casual. He came with his tripod. The shoot was about an hour and a half. We had champagne and socialized for an hour or two afterward. It was a fun day. I had no idea it would become that famous. I wish I had royalties.

**Why do you think so many people love "Poolside Gossip"?**

It's our lifestyle. We have such indoor-outdoor living. We have meals out on the terrace. The photo shows the mountains, the sun, the pool. It just is our lifestyle. Of course, it's the architecture of the house in the background, too.

**You're giving short shrift to the clothes and hair.**

There were no makeup or ward-

num shutters. If it was windy or sunny, you could close them. The fireplace was Arizona stone. The chimney came all the way up, so there was a fireplace on the second level, too.

I fell in love with the design of the house and the loggia. On a clear day, you could almost see the Salton Sea. We had breakfast up there. There was a dumbwaiter on the loggia. If we forgot a lemon for the martinis, we could call down and they would put it on the dumbwaiter.

**How did you come to own the Kaufman House?**

My husband, Joseph Linsk, had been coming out here for years and playing golf. After we were married, he said he wanted to move out here. I said, "Great." The first time we stayed at the racquet club. The second time we

Ms. Linsk and Ms. Kaptur were also to be the featured guests at “Poolside Gossip: An Evening With the Ladies From the Iconic Photograph,” an event at the Annenberg Theater on Feb. 19, as part of Modernism Week. Sadly, Ms. Kaptur died this month. But Ms. Linsk, now in her 70s and a well-known real estate agent and socialite in Palm Springs, still plans to participate. She dished by phone, a few days before Ms. Kaptur’s death, about the story behind the photo.

**Q. What do you remember about the photo shoot?**

**A.** It was 1970. It was in February, I think. It was about 11 in the morning. Slim called us. He knew

he was giving one of his

**clothes and hair.**

There were no makeup or wardrobe people. Slim said, “Pull something out of your closet.” Our house was done in yellow: the umbrellas were yellow, the flowers yellow. So I thought I’d wear something yellow. My outfit was in yellow terry cloth. I had on palazzo pants. Helen showed up in that fabulous white lace. She looked so glamorous!

Both of our outfits were bare midriff. We both had big hair. In those days, you had big hair.

**What do you see when you look at the photo?**

I have such great memories of that house. It had those alumi-

The first time we stayed at the racquet club. The second time we stayed at Claudette Colbert’s house. Then a real estate agent told us about the Neutra house. We got to the gate, and I looked at all the Arizona stone, and I said: “This is our house, Joe. This is our house.”

**Do you own a copy of “Poolside Gossip”?**

I have one signed by Slim. It’s hanging in my house.

Slim called me one day from a book-signing party in New York and said, “Why is this photo so famous?” I said, “Slim, it’s because I’m in it.”

*STEVEN KURUTZ*