



Ranking NFL teams from most to least likely to return to playoffs

SPORTS, 1C

The Desert Sun

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2026 | DESERTSUN.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

USA TODAY BEST OF



Bar Manager Cameron Robbins gives a fiery show to finish off The Ambrosia, a secret menu cocktail featuring two types of rum, hibiscus syrup and coconut, behind the bar at The Reef in Palm Springs May 27. PHOTOS BY ANDY ABEYTA/THE DESERT SUN

This Palm Springs bar keeping tradition alive

Paul Albani-Burgio Palm Springs Desert Sun | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Reef has been a mainstay of Palm Springs’ stacked tiki scene since it began serving up burgers, its trademark Palm Springs Punch and plenty of good times nearly a decade ago. • But now, this nautical-themed bar is making national news after USA TODAY named it one of the 38 best bars in the whole country. Food writers across the country nominated bars that excited them, bars they would recommend to friends and family, bars they’d return to again and again. • “I’m proud of my staff, and I’m proud of what we have accomplished,” said owner Rory Snyder. “We try to come into this place every day and make it a little better. But ultimately, I think before it’s a good tiki bar, it has to be a good bar, and I think we are a good bar.”

What makes The Reef in Palm Springs stand out

The Reef sits within the Caliente Tropics Resort, a Polynesian-themed motel with a colorful history dating back to the mid-1960s. But you wouldn’t have any idea what sits hidden inside from merely looking at the motel’s classic mid-century modern exterior, which fronts one of Palm Springs’ main thoroughfares — Palm Canyon Drive — and is dominated by a large A-frame and a sign for The Reef’s sibling Mexican restaurant, Sancho’s.

Head past the A-frame, though, and around to the side of the building that houses both Sancho’s and the resort’s check-in desk and you’ll soon deduce you’re on the right track as you approach a doorway watched over by a scowling tiki sculpture. Walk through it (and then through another door marked with a sailor’s wheel) and you’ll end up in a dimly lit room populated with everything from hanging toy sharks and “Star Wars” memorabilia to a framed photo of “Love Boat” bartender Isaac Washington and, of course, tikis nearly

See TIKI BAR, Page 5A

More inside

7 Coachella Valley bars we wish made USA TODAY’s Best in U.S. list, 3A

► A Classic Mai Tai is served at The Reef in Palm Springs on May 27.



Is tech helping or hurting students?

California schools take action

Paris Barraza
USA TODAY NETWORK

When Eric Hanson’s young daughter came home from school repeating “subscribe” like she’d been watching YouTube, he and his wife had some questions about her classroom.

Why are they watching YouTube in school? What are they watching?

His daughter, who is going into the third grade, attends a school in Los Angeles Unified School District.

It’s one of the largest school districts in the nation, and like others, it’s wrestling with what some advocates say is too much technology use in schools.

The district established limits on how much time students spend on screens earlier this year. It also eliminated device use among its youngest pupils, in addition to other directives. The new policy came as leaders of another large school district in California took action: The approval of a resolution that, at its heart, looks at technology currently being used and assesses whether it’s helping or hurting students’ learning and their mental health, the San Diego Unified school board president said.

Change comes for LAUSD students in August

Districts across the nation are evaluating the role of technology in classrooms. A bill introduced in the California legislature earlier this year is in part calling for the state’s department of education to develop and release model policies about using school-issued devices — policies that would take into consideration screen time exposure at each grade level like Los Angeles Unified has done.

For Hanson, the resolution that set Los Angeles Unified’s policy into motion represents what he hopes will be the first of many opportunities for the district to “recalibrate” their technology use. Parents of the district’s youngest can expect to see the policy kick in when the new school year starts.

“The first day of school in August — things will look different as a result of this policy,” Nick Melvoin, a district board member who was involved in the resolution’s creation, said in May.

One parent said their dream policy would entail a culture shift in how Los Angeles Unified approaches classroom instruction.

“That means analog learning is the default and tech has to be proven. It has to be held to a higher standard,” said Kate Brody, a parent and member of the nationwide Schools Beyond Screens coalition that says it’s advocating for classroom technology that’s “student centered” as opposed to “corporate sponsored.”

Brody, the policy director for Schools Beyond Screens, said the hope was that the district could serve as a model for other large districts to follow.

“To show that a district of this size

See TECH, Page 5A

