

PRESS

[Debra Gruszecki, K Kaufmann and Mike Perrault](#) • The Desert Sun •
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Side project maps out path toward popularity

As general manager at **Acqua Pazza** at The River for the past six years, **Willie Rhine** has developed an almost instinctive grasp of what keeps visitors and residents coming back to the Rancho Mirage eatery — quality, good value and good service. So, it's no surprise that when Rhine launched his own side project, **City Pocket Maps**, earlier this year, he put the same three selling points front and center. The pocket-sized, fold-up maps provide an easy-to-use street guide, plus information on local tourist attractions, and ads and discount coupons for popular restaurants and businesses. Rhine started with east and west valley versions of the map in March, and is now launching a second edition of maps for the 2011 season — east, west and a new LGBT version — all distributed at hotels, chambers of commerce and visitor centers across the valley.

Rhine, a native of Scotland who's been in the desert for 18 years, got the idea for the maps during a trip of his own to Guadalajara, Mexico. The map distributed to tourists there was so large and unwieldy, he eventually threw it away, he recalled.

Instead, he wanted something people “could put in a pocket or a lady could put in a purse that everyone would have no difficulty in using and keeping, like matchbooks, a reminder of their trip,” he said.

The response so far has been positive from both advertisers and visitors. **Eisenhower Medical Center, the Kraft-Nabisco LPGA Championship** and **Desert Cities Restaurant Week** have all signed up as front-cover advertisers, Rhine said.

“I've had requests online from brides,” he said. “They've requested maps to put in guests' goodie bags.”

The desert market, however receptive, is limited, Rhine said. So what's next?

“My goal in the future is to do other cities,” he said. “San Francisco, San Diego, that's my goal. I want to do more maps.”

Willie Rhine shows a sample of his City Pocket Maps. (Omar Ornelas The Desert Sun)

