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PLAYER
One of Yul Brynner's
previously unpublished
photographs of his
friend and golf partner
Frank Sinatra, in Palm
Springs, October 1964.

FAMILY ALBUM

Lost WEEKEND

NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN PHOTOS OF FRANK SINATRA
*PROMPT SOUL-SEARCHING: IF YOU PLAYED GOLF WITH OL'
BLUE EYES, WOULD YOU LET HIM WIN?* By Alex Hitz **»**

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FAMILY ALBUM



GAMING LICENSE

Clockwise from top left: Sinatra with his airplane, Doris Brynner, and a friend; at the Canyon Country Club with Bill and Edie Goetz; bicycling at the club. "The competition was fierce," says Doris Brynner.

"Always a helicopter or Sinatra's plane," Doris says. "And everything was orange: the sofas, the chairs, the carpets. It was Frank's favorite color." The house? "It was a compound, so cozy and great. It was a super-modern house. There were bungalows for the guests, so everyone was on his own except when they didn't want to be. So civilized," she says. "I sat by the piano-shaped pool while Yul and Frank played golf nonstop. Yul won. Or was it Frank? Fierce competition."

Sinatra liked to keep the food simple. "He loved meatballs and spaghetti. And lasagna," Doris remembers. "And the booze. The boys boozed a bit, you see..." Sinatra was single at the time.

After dinner it must have been some scene. "They would tell stories," she says, "have a few drinks, play the piano and sing. Such fun people. Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Bill and Edie Goetz, us. Frank would sing duets with his records, Yul accompanying him on his guitar. Just another Saturday night." «

"We were there constantly—always!" explains Doris Brynner when I call her about these never-before-seen photos of a weekend trip to Palm Springs with Frank Sinatra in October 1964. Yul Brynner, who was married to Doris at the time and who became an icon as the king of Siam, was also the world class photographer who took these pictures. In 1996 his and Doris's daughter, my friend Victoria Brynner, collected his work in a book, *Yul Brynner: Photographer*. But these shots were not included. One afternoon last year in Los Angeles, Victoria was proud to show me some unpublished images of

her father's that were stored in a black kid leather Hermès photo album her mother had made in the 1960s.

The Brynners' milieu then, as shown in image after image, was the gratin of Hollywood and the international jetset: Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, Audrey Hepburn and Mel Ferrer, Quique and Louis Jourdan, Hubert de Givenchy, the Guy de Rothschilds. Doris, who now lives in Switzerland and Paris, where she oversees Dior's Maison collection, remembers it all quite well, starting with the way they would get to Sinatra's house, Twin Palms (named for the two crooked trees that stood near the entrance).

STYLE SPY
PERSONAL TIME



Victory SIGN

THE QUEST FOR A FAMILY HEIRLOOM THAT WAS THE SECRET TO ONE MAN'S SUCCESS.

By Alex Hitz

My stepfather, the late conductor Robert Shaw, was a man of great style—although he would never have admitted it. For him style was quality and craftsmanship. The tailcoats he had made to wear onstage were inspected from the inside, before the linings were put in, to ensure that the seams were straight. The black Steinway grand piano he studied his scores on was tuned meticulously by Mr. Gomez every quarter, as he watched. Robert delighted in the details and processes of producing just about anything, no minutia too small for him to grasp.

The son of a fundamentalist minister from California, he was a philosophy student at Pomona College when he was discovered in 1937 by radio superstar Fred Waring. Waring sent him to New York City and got him a job on the radio at NBC, where he became an apprentice to Arturo Toscanini, then the conductor of the NBC symphony. The rest is history. In the 1930s, Toscanini was like Dudamel, Justin Bieber, and Brad Pitt rolled into one.

In 1954, Robert made it big when his album *Christmas Hymns and Carols* went gold, which at that time meant it had sold at least a million copies; it was the first classical record ever to do so. Robert had

grown up poor, and although he had had early success on the radio, it wasn't until that gold record that he felt he had truly hit the big time. Even after 38 Grammy nominations and 17 Grammy awards, the Kennedy Center Honors, the French Legion d'Honneur, and the Presidential Medal of the Arts, Robert was most proud of that first gold record.

In '54, at 38, he decided he would indulge his success, but only in "practical" ways. The first order of business was a new car to take on the road, as he spent 40 weeks a year touring. He ordered a '55 Bentley Continental drophead, one of only 13 made, two-tone in black and silver with dove-gray hides. He was in good company—the Bentley order books show that the other customers for the convertible that year included Gianni Agnelli, Cary Grant, and the Aga Khan.

A new car needs a proper garage, so Robert bought an eight-bedroom house

on Nantucket (later acquired by Tommy Hilfiger). It was a good buy, as it cost only about twice what he had paid for the Bentley. And then, because his stopwatch had worn out, he bought a **proper timepiece**: a round Audemars Piguet 5476, an 18K self-winding watch with a second hand so he could time his performances precisely.

Before he died, Robert gave the Bentley to me, but he decided the Steinway and the Audemars would go to my half-brother, a student at Yale at the time. Somehow that precious watch was run through the rinse cycle at a New Haven laundromat. It was a total loss. I was distraught. I searched for an Audemars of my own—to be protected and preserved for all time—and ended up with two. A square-faced style from the same year as the original appeared one year at the January jewelry show in Miami. Another model, with a round dial that looked very similar to Robert's watch, though in an ultrathin version, was soon discovered at the Antiquarius in West Hollywood, a series of stalls where movie stars often went to sell their possessions.

Somehow the two watches made up one. Or close. I treasure them both and wear them often. But the mere fact that there are two is a metaphor, a reminder that there was only *one* Robert Shaw. ☺

FAMILIAR FACE
The author (below) and two Audemars Piguet watches inspired by his stepfather Robert Shaw's watch. Far left: Shaw with Hitz's mother Caroline Sauls after their wedding, 1973.

