

TALIESIN TURNS 70 • SKIING THE NORTH RIM • PIE TO DIE FOR

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

JANUARY 2008

**Weekend
Getaways**
25 of the State's
Best Adventures

PLUS:
Hugh Downs'
Favorite Road Trip

AND:
Flagstaff's
Oldest Hotel

ASU Legend
Frank Kush

Hiking
Oro Valley

Havasu Falls, see page 16

Features

14 Weekend Getaways

If you're looking for an excuse to hit the road this year, and maybe learn something along the way, look no further. This month, we feature 25 of the state's best weekend getaways. Buckle up, and drive safely.

BY KELLY KRAMER

24 White Space

There are people around the country — we won't name names — who think of the Arizona landscape as nothing more than a giant hole in the ground surrounded by sand dunes. They think there's only one season, and snow is unheard of. Of course, if those folks would ever set foot here, they'd see that Arizona is the most beautiful place in the world, and when it comes to snow, we can certainly hold our own.

36 Seventh Natural Wonderland

In the meadow, there are a couple of things you can do: You can build a snowman and pretend that he is Parson Brown, or you can slap on a pair of cross-country skis and hit the trail. We suggest the latter, in particular, at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. The snow-covered meadows are spectacular, and the backdrop is out of this world.

BY MICHAEL ENGELHARD PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATE THOMPSON

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Living in the little towns of the White Mountains isn't for everyone. The extreme elevation means chilly winters with lots of snow, and in the off-season, there's no one around. It's cold and it's quiet. Nonetheless, there are a few hearty souls who wouldn't live anywhere else.

BY TOM CARPENTER PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ZICKL

48 Wright From the Start

Seventy years ago this month, Frank Lloyd Wright began unveiling what many consider to be his most impressive work ever. Taliesin West was designed as a home and a school, and seven decades later, it's still going strong — young architects from around the world continue flocking to North Scottsdale to learn their trade in a compound created by the master.

BY LAWRENCE W. CHEEK PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID H. SMITH

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Honey Bee Canyon: Birds, bees and spectacular views of the Santa Catalinas are among the highlights on this hike in Southern Arizona.

online arizonahighways.com

Whether it's witnessing a gunfight in Tombstone or slipping down a wintry slope in Flagstaff, we offer plenty of weekend getaways. Get the scoop on where to go and what to see in every corner of the state with our online *Trip Planner*. Plus, see how winter beauty touches Arizona's diverse landscapes in this month's slide show — get it all at arizonahighways.com.

WEEKEND GETAWAY: Heat up your weekend and travel Southeastern Arizona's Salsa Trail.

EXPERIENCE ARIZONA: Find out what's happening this month with our calendar of events.

Photographic Prints Available

Prints of some photographs in this issue are available for purchase, as designated in captions. To order, call 866-962-1191 or visit arizonahighwaysprints.com.

SOFT ROCK Hunkered down by a rock of similar size and coloration, a young cottontail rabbit does what it can to avoid dinner plans with one of its many predators. See story, page 24. Photograph by Tom Bean

FRONT COVER A hint of a rainbow hangs in dust-laden, late-afternoon storm light over Grand Canyon's Havasu Falls. See story, page 16. Photograph by Kerrick James

To order a print of this photograph, see information on opposite page.

If you're interested in visiting Havasu Falls for more than a weekend, sign up for one of two photo workshops: May 15-19 or November 16-20. For more information, call 602-712-2004 or visit friends-of-azhighways.com.

BACK COVER Melting in morning sunlight, a fragment of ice clings to its fragile hold on a saguaro spine in the Tucson Mountains west of Tucson. See story, page 24. Photograph by Thomas Wiewandt





JEFF KIDA

JANUARY 1. This is when it all begins. No more Mr. Goodbars. No more iTunes. No more sitting on the couch and watching reruns of *The Muppet Show*. It's a new year, and things are going to be different. That's the theory, anyway — until reality settles in and resolutions fall off the wagon. Sometimes, though, whether it's a result of determination or dumb luck, big things do begin on the first day of the year.

Think about January 1, 1962. That's when The Beatles auditioned for Decca Records in London. They weren't signed — Decca signed Brian Poole & the Tremeloes instead — but so what, the Beatles irruption was under way, and music would never be the same again. Television changed on January 1, too. Nine years before The Beatles, in 1951, the Zenith Corporation of Chicago tested the first-ever version of pay-per-view. It was embryonic, but for a buck, movie-lovers could sit in their living rooms and order *Homecoming*, which starred Clark Gable and Lana Turner. It was light years from HDTV, but still.

Like music and television, magazines turn pages as well, and when they do, the transition usually takes place in January. *Arizona Highways* is no exception. As you'll see, our first issue of 2008 features a few changes. The biggest shift is in what we call the "front of the book" — those pages that come before the feature stories.

Most noticeable is a new department called *The Journal*, which is a series of pages dedicated to the things this magazine has been mastering for 83 years — history, nature, photography. It goes beyond that, though. In addition, we'll be using *The Journal* to spotlight some of the best restaurants, diners, hotels, inns and B&Bs around the state. Also, at your request, we're bringing back our "things to do" page, which highlights some of the most interesting events, workshops and festivals of the month. There will be people in *The Journal*, too — some you've heard of; others, probably not. Our goal with this section is to tell you as much as we can about the people, places and things that make Arizona so interesting. There's a lot to cover, and *The Journal* is where we'll start.

Another new addition is our *Contributors* department. You've seen these in other magazines; we're including our version because we're proud of the writers and photographers who share their handiwork with us every month. More importantly, we want you to learn a little bit more about them — where they're from, what they might have experienced on a particular photo shoot or interview. ...

These are just a few of the changes. Coinciding with the additions to the magazine is the launch of our new Web site. Among other things, you'll find a "trip planner," several blogs and details about our upcoming amateur photo contest. The



site also offers a lot of archival information, including a guide to some of our favorite hikes. Check it out at arizonahighways.com.

Of course, along with all the new things, both online and in the magazine, there are plenty of old standbys. Just look at the images in *White Space*, this month's portfolio — it's vintage *Arizona Highways*, thanks to the excellent work of Peter Ensenberger, our longtime director of photography. Interesting people (see *The High Life*), adventure (see *Seventh Natural Wonderland*) and history (see *Wright From the Start*) are part of the equation, too. These are the kinds of feature stories you're used to getting, and these are the kinds of feature stories you'll continue to get. You'll also get a healthier dose of "service journalism" — stories that serve as a how-to guide for exploring the state. This month's cover story is a good example.

Weekend Getaways, by first-time contributor Kelly Kramer, details 25 of the state's best adventures. Some you can experience in a couple of hours, and others will take a day or two. Either way, there's something in there for everyone. And really, that's what we're striving for with each issue of *Arizona Highways*.

Whether you live in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, or Woods Canyon Lake, Arizona, we intend to make this magazine your primary source for learning about the Grand Canyon State. That's our resolution to you. Time will tell what happens with the iTunes and Mr. Goodbars, but when it comes to *Arizona Highways*, we have no intention of falling off the wagon.

— Robert Stieve

rstieve@arizonahighways.com

Shameless Self-Aggrandizement

In case you hadn't heard, *Arizona Highways* recently won six international magazine awards, including a gold medal for art direction (kudos to Barbara Glynn Denney, our extremely talented art director) — the awards were given by the International & Regional Magazine Association. In addition, four of our books recently received first-place awards from the Arizona Book Publishing Association. And there's more. Congratulations also go out to our siblings at *Arizona Highways TV*, who recently won four Emmys — Robin Sewell and her team do a remarkable job of showcasing the state. Hats off to everyone involved; you've made us all very proud.

Despite the remote nature of the White Mountains, there are some people who actually live there. See *The High Life*, page 42. Photograph by David Zickl

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highways on tv

For more coverage of the Grand Canyon State, check out *Arizona Highways TV*, an Emmy-award winning show hosted by former news anchor Robin Sewell. For broadcast times, visit arizonahighways.com and click *Online Extras*.

CONTRIBUTORS



KELLY KRAMER

As an Arizona native who loves to hit the road with a cooler full of Red Bull, Kelly Kramer has a firsthand understanding of her home state's

diversity. Not everyone, however, has the same comprehension. "Many people look to California or other neighboring states for a taste of adventure," she says when asked about this month's cover story (see *Weekend Getaways*, page 14). "They're unaware of Arizona's unlimited options — from desert excursions to cool retreats in the White Mountains. What's even more surprising is the number of Arizonans who have never been to the Grand Canyon. Even if you've already been there, it's a place you should return to over and over again." Kolb Studio at the Canyon, the Rosson House in Phoenix and the London Bridge in Lake Havasu City are among the many getaways we feature this month. And so is Hart Prairie Preserve, which is where Kelly's headed as soon as she stocks her cooler. "Just the thought of relaxing beneath a Bebb willow is enough for me to get in the car and head north." Kelly Kramer is a Phoenix-based writer. This is her first story for *Arizona Highways*.



KATE THOMPSON

As an avid skier, photographer Kate Thompson wasn't worried about the physicality of shooting Walhalla Plateau on the North Rim of the Grand

Canyon (see *Seventh Natural Wonderland*, page 36). She was, however, surprised by the sheer cold during the expedition. "At night, I would leave my cameras and lenses outside in a sealed bag to keep them away from the condensation in my tent, and I had to sleep with all my camera batteries at night to keep them warm," she says. "On exceptionally cold mornings, my lenses would still frost over because of the moisture from the previous day." Kate goes on to say that the expedition battled constantly changing conditions, but she was prepared after skiing every other evening for a month prior to the trip near her home in Dolores, Colorado. In addition to *Arizona Highways*, Thompson's work has appeared in *National Geographic Adventure* and *National Geographic Traveler*, as well as the book *Lasting Light: 125 Years of Grand Canyon Photography* by Stephen Trimble.



LAWRENCE W. CHEEK

Seattle-based writer Larry Cheek knows a thing or two about Frank Lloyd Wright — not in the way one of Wright's close personal friends might un-

derstand, but in the way that someone who's been researching the man and his legacy for a very long time does. "I've been writing about Wright and his Arizona work for more than 20 years," says Cheek, who penned this month's feature on Taliesin West (see *Wright From the Start*, page 48). "I thought I knew the subject pretty well, but while working on this piece, I learned for the first time that Taliesin West was built without the benefit of a foundation." Although Cheek had nothing but good things to say about his most recent experience with the Frank Lloyd Wright folks, the relationship has been historically rocky — as an architecture critic for the *Tucson Citizen* from 1978 to 1987, Cheek wrote often about the cultish aspects of the fellowship, which didn't sit well with Wright's devotees. Now the architecture critic for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, his work has also appeared in *Architecture*, *Sunset* and the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*. His memoir, *The Year of the Boat*, will be published in April.



DAVID ZICKL

Longtime Arizona resident David Zickl is no stranger to challenging assignments, given that his work has appeared in *Time*,

Business Week, *Forbes* and *New York Magazine*. Sure, much of Zickl's work for this issue of *Arizona Highways* was centered on portraits of people who call the White Mountains home (see *The High Life*, page 42), but that doesn't mean the work was any less challenging. "Getting everyone's schedule in order was pretty difficult, especially since I wanted to shoot them at either sunrise or sunset," Zickl says. "Not to mention — I stood in some very cold water in the Little Colorado River for more than an hour to get the perfect shot of Chip Chipman, a well-respected fly-fisherman in the White Mountains." Even though Tom Carpenter, the Flagstaff-based writer who wrote the story, thinks that living in the White Mountains might be paradise, David Zickl is content to stay at home in Fountain Hills with his daughter, Lauren.



Simply Awesome

Of the many fabulous autumn pictures in your October 2007 issue, Robert G. McDonald's photographs of the San Francisco Peaks dusted with an early snowfall and framed by golden aspens, and the Schott's yuccas against a background of vibrantly red maple leaves in the Chiricahua Mountains were simply awesome!

Russ Butcher, Tucson

Yes, Virginia...

After four short visits to your beautiful state, and subscriptions to *Arizona Highways* since the 1950s, I love them — the state and the magazine. Recently, your Arizona Babe Ruth 14-year-olds came to Glen Allen for the Babe Ruth World Series. I felt like I was rooting for the home team. The Arizona boys ended the seventh inning with an awesome double play to win the World Series. I hope your boys and fans enjoyed my wonderful state as much as I've enjoyed yours — mostly through *Arizona Highways*.

Betty Kirby, Glen Allen, Virginia

Storming the Castle

I was very impressed with your article [*Mystery Castle of the Desert*, October 2007]. It was very interesting to both my husband and me. My current husband has been in Arizona since the late 1960s, and didn't know that the Mystery Castle was here. I've been here since the 1980s, and I didn't know it was here either. I recently called out there and talked to Ms. Gulley about the Mystery Castle, and she told me that we could come out to visit in October. Thank you for enlightening us to something that we haven't seen.

Ursula Chamberlin, Youngtown

Caught Up in the Raptor

I enjoyed your article about the black hawks [*Bird of Paradise*, September 2007], and noted that there are very few of them left. Having just read the article, you can understand how surprised I

was to find one on top of a power pole in northeast Tucson. As I was washing my truck, a large shadow came over me, and when I looked up, I saw a sight very close to the photo you display on page 40 of the September issue. I keep a pair of 10X binoculars in the truck, and what I thought I saw was correct. The hawk had the same white band on the tail, and was very dark in color. It flew to a nearby power pole and proceeded to have lunch on some small animal it had caught. Had I not just read the article by Sam Negri, I would have missed out on this rare treat.

Dale A. Swiss, Tucson

Regarding the article on black hawks, my husband and I have seen a pair of them with a little one in north-central Phoenix while taking our early morning walks. We haven't seen them recently, but in the spring, we would see and hear the other birds calling to each other and flying toward the trees to protect their young or themselves as the hawks flew around the neighborhood. We've also seen mockingbirds fending them off their nests. The black hawks are such beautiful birds! Thanks for this article.

Marie E. Sanchez, Phoenix

Shipped Off to Siberia

First, permit me to take the liberty of suggesting that you get out your world atlas; I want to show you the country where my letter comes from.

Kazakhstan is a very large country located in Central Siberia, 2,000 miles

from west or east, in the middle of Russia. How often do you get letters from a place that far from Arizona?

I have been among your happy subscribers for almost a decade, very much enjoying each beautiful issue. However, I have never paid a single cent (or tenge in our currency) for my subscription. Sounds rather odd, doesn't it?

This has been made possible due to one very special person, David P. Harrison, president of Medical Resources International. His home is near Baltimore, Maryland.

Thanks to Mr. Harrison and your marvelous *Arizona Highways*, a lot of Kazakh people, especially hundreds of my students, their families and friends, have become familiar with many interesting facts about Arizona in particular and the United States in general.

Mr. Harrison is rather well-known here via his 1995 Humanitarian Aid Project for the people of Semipalatinsk (the former Soviet nuclear testing area for 40 years). He made many friends living in our city of 240,000 for a year managing the distribution of over 60 tons (worth \$6,200,000) of medicine and medical supplies to an area larger than France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Belgium taken together, multiplied by two.

We suspect that Mr. Harrison has provided *Arizona Highways* issues and subscriptions to other people as a lovely information gift about his country ... for years! Surely, this generous gentleman deserves something for his most welcome efforts on all our behalf. Perhaps you could publish this letter in your *Letters to the Editor* section of *Arizona Highways*.

Olga N. Anastasova, English teacher, Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan

Editor's Note: Consider it done, Olga. On behalf of everyone at *Arizona Highways*, thank you, Mr. Harrison. **AH**



Roadside Attraction

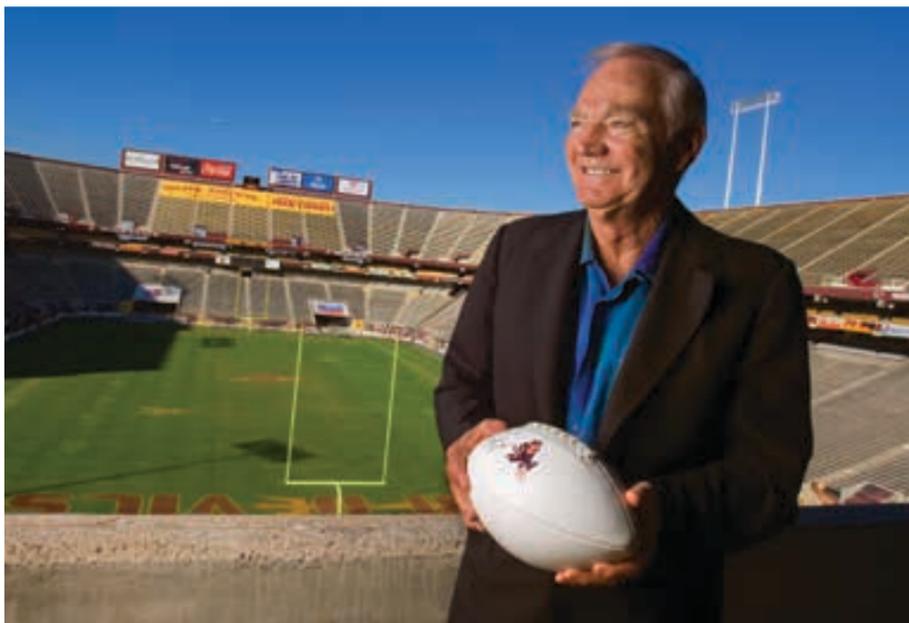
SURE, THE NEW YEAR IS ALL ABOUT LOOKING AHEAD, but January also is a perfect time to look back with a drive along Historic Route 66. En route, get your kitsch in Holbrook at the Wigwam Motel — a village of concrete teepees surrounded by vintage cars.

■ For more information: 928-524-3048.

KERRICK JAMES

contact us

If you have thoughts or comments about anything in *Arizona Highways*, we'd love to hear from you. We can be reached at editor@arizonahighways.com, or through the post office at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85009. For more information, visit arizonahighways.com.



JEFF KIDA

PEOPLE

Frank Kush

January means “bowl season,” and for ASU’s former head coach, the Sun Devils are always top of mind.

FRANK KUSH WAS A MAKER of men. For more than 20 years, he roamed the sidelines at Sun Devil Stadium, leading the Sun Devils of Arizona State University to a record 176 wins — including two conference titles — and only 54 losses.

Although the latter part of Kush’s tenure at ASU was marked by some controversy, his imprint on the school’s football program remains. Kush — now the Sun Devils’ director for football development — is the man behind the team’s modern-day training camp, Camp Tontozona, as well as the man for whom the stadium’s playing field is named.

According to the coach himself, much of his success is due to the camaraderie his teams developed during the time they spent at Camp Tontozona, the university-owned property near Payson where the team spends the latter part of each summer.

“Our first year at Camp T was in 1959,” Kush remembers. “Tanner Brothers was building a road from Payson to Kohl’s Ranch, and I asked them if they could clear space for a football field. They did. And the coaches and I planted all the grass seed for that field.”

Although it took some convincing to get

the university, the Board of Regents and the NCAA to approve Camp T as the Devils’ summer home, Kush made it happen. And he did it because the place reminded him of Pennsylvania, his childhood home.

“When I played football, my high school purchased the Pittsburgh Steelers’ camp because it had been flooded out,” he says. “They bought it and straightened it up. I was just in pig heaven when we went there.” Why? Having come from a family with 15 children, Kush was delighted to have a bed of his own and three square meals a day. “We had water beds long before anyone had water beds,” he adds.

Today, Kush spends much of his time raising money for ASU’s football program, but he rarely misses any home games, particularly this season, as the team celebrated its 30th year in the PAC-10.

“Initially, I was opposed to ASU leaving the Western Athletic Conference and moving over to the PAC-10,” Kush says. “But then I learned from Coach Dan Devine that we could recruit some of the players that the California schools didn’t take. We really wanted great players, so we moved them over from California. The program has really come a long way since then.”

Indeed it has. But that’s not to say that Kush has forgotten the good old days.

“I still remember the first game I coached in Sun Devil Stadium,” he says. “We played West Texas and we beat them. We went in there and just gave them the finger.”

— Kelly Kramer

Of course we have a recent photo of Mr. Downs, but we couldn’t resist this classic from the ‘70s.

CELEBRITY Q & A

Hugh Downs

by Dave Pratt

AHM: If you were trying to convince your pals in New York that Arizona is one of the most beautiful places in the world, where would you take them?

HD: I’d take Easterners to the Rim of the Grand Canyon, there being nothing else in the world like it; I’d like to show them the rocks in the Sedona area; I’d also take them into some of the wilderness areas north of New River Mesa on horseback to view petroglyphs of long-vanished Native Americans.

AHM: If you were making a road trip to Sedona, which would you choose: a Mustang convertible or an RV?

HD: Probably an RV. With the convertible, if it were summer, the heat and the ultraviolet light might be a disservice to my passengers. The sunshine is glorious — only Saudi Arabia can boast more — but no point in overdoing it.

AHM: When you travel around the country, what do people ask most about Arizona?

HD: Weirdly, I find a great number of people ask about rattlesnakes! I’ve had to remind some of them that more people are killed by lightning in Arizona than by rattlesnakes, and nobody has asked if I have a lightning rod on my house.

— Dave Pratt is the host of the “Dave Pratt in the Morning” show on KMLE 107.9 FM in Phoenix.



RESTAURANTS

Rock Springs Café

If you’re looking for a piece of pie that takes the cake, head to the middle of nowhere, just north of Phoenix.

Christina Wiles, Rock Springs Café.

WHILE THE WAITRESS WAS SLICING the large triangle of blueberry pie, the mouth of the lucky customer was beginning to water. By the time she took a bite, her taste buds were doing somersaults. That’s how good a piece of pie really is at the historic Rock Springs Café.

Your mother’s pies might have the same effect, but she can’t keep up with this place in terms of volume. If you’ve never been, Rock Springs Café is located along Interstate 17, about 45 minutes north of Phoenix. Chances are, you’ve driven by and never noticed. Next time, spoil yourself and take the Rock Springs exit.

The pies at the café are something special. That’s why folks from around the state and beyond travel to the desert to get a piece. Or two. Or three. Prices range from \$3.50 a slice to \$12.95 for an entire pie. In all, the café sells nearly 55,000 pies a year. Some are sold online, but if you have the option, it’s worth the experience of buying them in person.

Nestled among a saloon, gift shop, bedding store, tattoo parlor and various jewelry stands, the café itself is as interesting as the pie. It’s the pie, however, that draws the crowd. Picking out a flavor is the tough part.

“A lot of people come in for the Jack Daniels pecan pie,” says Tom Balcom, the café’s general manager. That’s not the only option, though. The café offers more than a dozen varieties featuring ingredients such as nuts, fresh fruit, crèmes and even a famous meringue topping.

Although pie is the main draw these days, the site was originally used as a stage stop, Indian encampment, and watering hole for miners, drovers and sheepherders. In 1924, a hotel and general store were opened, marking Rock Springs’ first commercial use.

According to Balcom, more growth is on the way. “There will be a petting zoo for children and also some festivals,” he says, “including a Halloween festival in October.”



JEFF KIDA

■ The café is open Sundays through Thursdays, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information, call 623-374-5794 or visit rockspringscfe.com.

— Ashley Macha



TOM BEAN

LODGING

Hotel Weatherford

There are plenty of reasons to visit Flagstaff this time of year. One of the best is the annual pinecone drop at the Weatherford.

RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR means more than confetti, conga lines and cosmopolitans at the Hotel Weatherford in Flagstaff. All three are available, of course, but the main attraction is a massive pinecone, which drops from the sky at midnight on New Year's Eve, closing the book on another year and kicking off the anniversary of the historic hotel.

By Arizona standards, this place is old — the doors were opened to the public on January 1, 1900. The man who made it happen was John W. Weatherford, who also built one of the first roads to the top of the San Francisco Peaks. After rolling into town in the late 1800s, Weatherford took a look around and looked away. There weren't any options for a decent night's sleep. So, he started work on what he hoped would become a "civilized oasis in the Wild West." Mission accomplished.

According to an early review in *The Coconino Sun*, Flagstaff's local paper at the time, the Weatherford was "first class in every aspect." No doubt, that's why guys like William Randolph Hearst, Teddy Roosevelt and Nicholas Kramer called it a night at the hotel. The list of notables is long, but they weren't all there for short visits.

Zane Grey, for example, spent several months at the hotel writing *Call of the Canyon*. It's a great book. What's more, his detailed descriptions of the interior of the hotel led modern-day renovators to some original fireplaces that had been

covered with plaster and hidden in the walls.

Another long-term resident was landscape artist Thomas Moran, who spent many nights at the hotel in the early 1900s. He was there working on his watercolors of Western landscapes. His artwork put food on his table, but it also helped persuade Congress to preserve the Grand Canyon as a national park. Good work, Tom.

A lot of good things have come out of the Weatherford, but like many old hotels in this country, it wasn't always a hotel. Over the years, the building has housed Flagstaff's first telephone exchange company, a number of restaurants, a theater, a radio station and a billiard hall. It's also survived fire and a planned demolition. Today, it's one of the few places where you can spend a night in downtown Flagstaff, and it's definitely worth a visit, especially if you can make time for a few beers on the second-floor balcony, which wraps around two sides of the building and overlooks Leroux Street.

The rooms are nice, too, in a historic kind of way. They're small, and the bathrooms are even smaller, but they're clean, the hot water is hot, and the cold water is cold. Quaint and cozy, that's what to expect when you lock your door.

The lobby, with its winding staircase and wooden phone booth, is along the same lines. When you walk in, you'll get an instant sense of stepping back in time. As you'll see, there's no mistaking the Weatherford for a Four Seasons, and on New Year's Eve, there's no mistaking Flagstaff for Times Square, but those are selling points.

Indeed, there are plenty of reasons to visit Flagstaff this time of year — the snowboarding, the skiing — but on December 31, the main event is the great pinecone drop.

■ For more information, call 928-779-1919 or visit weatherfordhotel.com.

— Robert Stieve

PHOTOGRAPHY

Making Photographs

For more than 80 years, this magazine has been showcasing the best photographers in the world. In our upcoming book, you'll learn how they operate.



GARY LADD

Mount Hayden from Point Imperial

SIXTEEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE *Arizona Highways* published a how-to book on photography, so expectations run high for the spring release of our newest book, *Arizona Highways Photography Guide: How & Where to Make Great Photographs*. The book, which is an exploration of photography in the *Arizona Highways* style, brings together 14 of our most respected photographers — seasoned veterans who share their tips, techniques and favorite Arizona locations.

Indeed, the book's list of contributors reads like a "Who's Who" from the pages of our magazine: David Muench, Jack Dykinga, Gary Ladd, LeRoy DeJolie. ... Although the book is billed as a guidebook revealing the secrets of the pros, it also includes detailed directions to the beautiful places that inspire their collective passion for Arizona. And, of course, it's lushly illustrated from cover to cover with the kinds of photographs you expect from the world's leading publisher of scenic landscape photography.

But it doesn't stop there. Here's a sneak peek at what makes this unique book appealing to photographers at every level:

It opens with a stunning portfolio chock-full of large, high-quality reproductions as only *Arizona Highways* can do them. Next, "The Basics" section presents an overview of the most recent evolution in digital photography — whether you're poised to switch from film to pixels or trying to master cutting-edge equipment and software, this section will help get you there. And, because good technique consists of more than just learning to use the latest gear, four of the book's chapters stress the art of photography.

For example, the "Composition" chapter, which lays out

the steps to refine your compositions and take full advantage of every lighting condition, will help you capture the world around you in new and creative ways.

The "Types of Photography" section explores the nuances of photographing your favorite subjects: landscape, wildlife, people, events, architecture, travel and adventure. Specialists in each photographic discipline explain how they approach their subjects and how they maximize their success rates in each situation.

No doubt, many of you will be tempted to go directly to the "Places for Photography" section, which is where our photographers guide you to more than 70 of their favorite spots around Arizona. With more than 300 years of knowledge and experience among them, they reveal the special features at each destination and divulge secrets to capturing the essence of these hidden locations in peak light and season.

By the way, several key deadlines were missed in the production of our new book — it caused some delays, but we wanted to make sure the book was worthy of the *Arizona Highways* name. And we believe it is.

As you'll see, it's packed with great information, some of which we'll share with you each month on this page — look for photography tips taken from the book.

We kick off the series this month with expert advice on photographing the Grand Canyon from longtime *Arizona Highways* contributor and veteran photo workshop leader Gary Ladd (see below).

— Peter Ensenberger,
Director of Photography

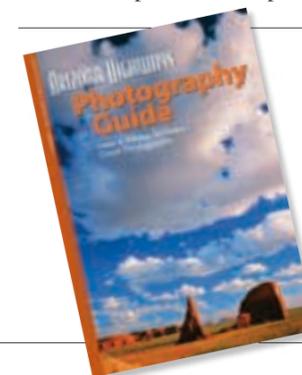


PHOTO TIP

Point Imperial is the highest point on the Grand Canyon's North Rim. It stands at 8,800 feet. Sunrise and early morning — other than stormy weather — offer the best times to photograph this area. Most times the camera points southeast toward Mount Hayden

and the maze of side canyons beyond. Because there's little room at the main overlook, I usually try to arrive early to claim a decent spot, an important point if you're working with a tripod. Views to the north and northeast up Marble

Canyon and on to the Paria Plateau are also appealing in early morning light. Take a long lens for this view and consider using a polarizing filter — the angle is just right for summer morning photography. — Gary Ladd

online For more photography tips and information, visit arizonahighways.com and click on "Photography."

HISTORY

The Harvey Girls

They weren't allowed to hunt for husbands, wear makeup or chew gum, but Fred Harvey's "girls" made a mark on the West.

IN THE LATE 1800S, rail travel included many of the hazards that plagued the rest of the West: train robberies, buffalo stampedes, Indian raids and a shortage of supplies — should a locomotive break down in the middle of nowhere. Perhaps the greatest threat to rail passengers, however, was the lousy food served along the train route. Facing rough country was one thing, but facing a plate of rancid bacon and week-old coffee served by filthy waiters in even filthier surroundings bordered on terrifying. Even for non-germaphobes.

Fred Harvey changed all of that when he opened his eating and hotel establishments, known as Harvey Houses, along the Santa Fe Railroad, which stretched from Kansas to California. And while

Harvey's menus boasted the freshest and finest dishes in the West, the success of his restaurants was due largely to the troops of fresh-faced young women he employed — the Harvey Girls.

In 1889, Harvey placed an ad in a newspaper: "Wanted — young women, 18 to 30 years of age, of good moral character, attractive and intelligent as waitresses in Harvey Eating Houses on the Santa Fe Railroad in the West. ..." The ladies answered. With few job options outside of teaching or the family farm, many saw Harvey's ad as a chance for adventure, and they came from Boston, Chicago and Kansas City to find their fortunes — and husbands — in the Wild West.

Today's businesses have nothing to do with Fred Harvey, who pioneered corporate training programs



Prim and proper Harvey Girls await the next train passengers to arrive at Winslow's La Posada, circa 1910.

when he mandated specific rules for the Harvey Girls. Doing their jobs the "Harvey Way" meant following a strict code of conduct that addressed everything from their style of dress to the way they served the customers. All Harvey Girls wore identical black uniforms, the same hairstyle and crisp white pinafores. What's more, Harvey didn't allow gum chewing, nail polish, makeup or jewelry. And the women signed work contracts that stipulated they wouldn't marry as long as they were employed as Harvey Girls. But that didn't stop many from husband-hunting. Even cowboy

humorist Will Rogers said of the Harvey Girls, "... they've kept the West supplied with food and wives."

In all, Fred Harvey operated 84 Harvey Houses, including seven in Arizona. And even though rail travel isn't as popular as it was 100 years ago, Harvey's influence can still be experienced at two of his finest Arizona establishments: El Tovar at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and La Posada in Winslow.

■ *Information: El Tovar, 888-297-2757 or grandcanyonlodges.com; La Posada, 928-289-4366 or laposada.org.*

— Sally Benford



NATURE

Rosy Boa

Although it's not as big as its cousins in the Amazon, Arizona's ancient snake is more than capable of squeezing the life out of its prey.

SNAKES TEND TO SCARE PEOPLE. Especially when the word "boa" is included in the name. The rosy boa (*Lichanura trivirgata*), which is found in the rocky deserts of Western Arizona, is one of the smaller members of the boa and python family. It reaches a length of about 3 feet, which makes it a midget compared to its giant relatives, the reticulated python of Southeast Asia and the anaconda of South America, both of which can exceed 30 feet in length.

All boas share one trait: They kill by constriction. Rosy boas eat mostly small mammals, which they catch through entrapment. The technique is to enter an active rodent den and lie in wait for its occupant to return. When it does, strong jaws lined with sharp, curved teeth lash out in the dark and secure the rodent long enough for the snake to wrap its powerful coils around the food and squeeze.

Each time the doomed victim breathes out, the grip is tightened. Death is by suffocation. When the prey is dead, the snake's coils slacken and the rodent is swallowed whole, transferring its energy to the snake as one link in the food

chain. Supertime over, the boa might remain underground for a few weeks digesting its meal, using the den as a serpent's ultimate "bed and breakfast."

Boas, whose North American ancestors date back 35 million years, are Arizona's most primitive snakes. Nonpoisonous, thick-bodied and slow, they're desert dwellers, and like their cousins from around the world, they've become targets of the pet trade. In the early '90s, the Arizona Game and Fish Department began a population study in Western Arizona to determine if rosy boas warranted protection from collecting.

After two years, the study yielded heartening news: Rosy boas are more plentiful than suspected. Their habit of spending so much time underground in rodent dens makes them appear scarce, but they're not. Nevertheless, because of the snakes' popularity, limitations have been placed on collecting, and they're protected from international trade.

Mother Nature helps their cause, as well. Because the boas' "rosy" or "butterscotch" coloration blends in so well with the desert habitat, detection by collectors or predators is difficult.

— Marty Cordano

nature factoid



RANDY PRENTICE

While a barrel cactus isn't a good source of liquid if you run out of water in the desert — the juice inside is unpalatable — the plant can lead you to water. A barrel cactus leans to the south, so it serves as a natural navigational tool, sometimes called a "compass cactus."

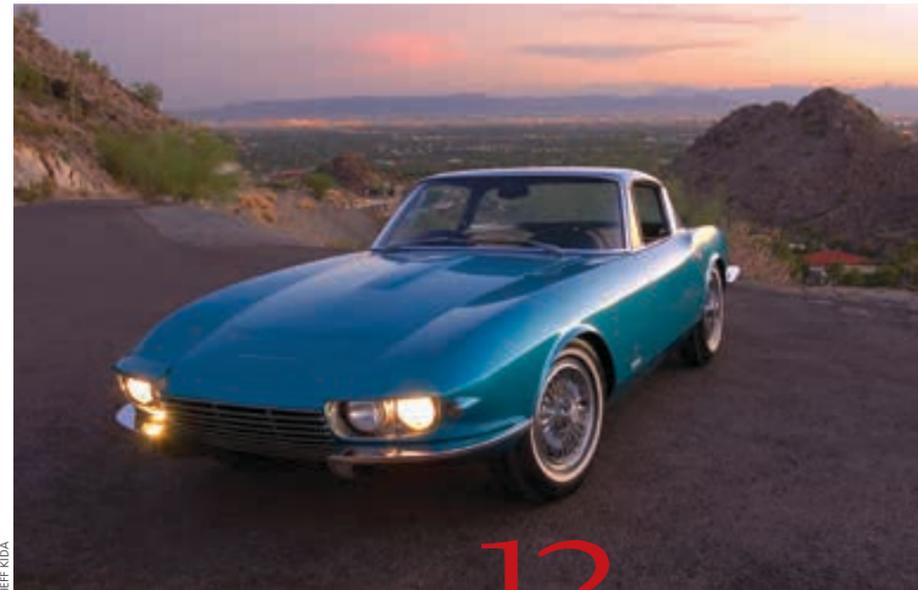


50 years ago in arizona highways

Among other things, our January 1958 issue featured a piece on the Sombrero Playhouse in Phoenix, the city's first stage theater — Kirk Douglas, Mickey Rooney and Imogene Coca performed there in the 1950s and 1960s. We also did stories on bird photography and Arizona's future as "America's Rose Garden."

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

- In the early morning hours of January 28, 1903, the Southern Pacific's *Sunset Limited* passenger train heading west to Tucson collided head-on with the eastbound No. 8 *Crescent City Express* near Esmond Station, killing at least 14 passengers and employees and sparking a huge fire that could be seen for miles.
- The city of Phoenix recorded its heaviest snowfall ever on January 21 and 22, 1937, when 1 to 4 inches of snow fell in the city and didn't melt for several days.
- In 1868, Thomas Hunter brought the first herd of cattle to graze in the Salt River Valley.



JEFF KIDA

12
JAN

THINGS TO DO

Coup d'Coupe

CLASSIC ROADSTERS, manly muscle cars, shiny sedans, slick and sexy sports cars ... these are just some of the highlights at the Barrett-Jackson Auction, which was first billed as the "Fiesta del los Auto Elegance" in 1967. In 1971, the fundraiser evolved

into a classic auto auction, and today, it's considered the "world's greatest car collector auction," an event that attracts high rollers, celebrities and automobile enthusiasts from around the world. In 2007, the auction drew more than 250,000 attendees

and earned \$112 million as 1,250 cars went on the block. This year's event takes place January 12 to 20 at West-World in Scottsdale, and promises to be just as exciting with cars such as the one-of-a-kind 1963 Pininfarina-bodied Corvette Rondine (above) up for bid. ■ Information: 480-421-6694 or barrett-jackson.com.



DON B. & RYAN B. STEVENSON

MASTERWORKS & MERLOT

A small town in the Sonoran Desert seems like an odd place to look for fine art and fine wine, but both are in abundance this month at the Carefree Fine Art and Wine Festival, January 18 to 20. Billed as Arizona's largest wine-tasting event, the festival features fine wines from around the world, and more than 160 artists show 5,000 masterpieces in a wide variety of media. ■ Information: 480-837-5637.

18
JAN

Wingding In Willcox

THEY TAKE WING FROM Siberia, Alaska and Canada every winter and head for the sunny skies of Southeastern Arizona. Each winter, thousands of sandhill cranes migrate to Willcox, which celebrates their return January 17 to 20 with the 15th annual Wings Over Willcox (WOW) Birding & Nature Festival. The festival's location, Sulphur Springs Valley, is home to a wide range of flora and fauna. But birds take center stage this month as WOW offers a host of activities, such as sunrise sandhill crane-viewing tours and daylong hawk stalks. Last year, more than 120 species of birds were viewed, and 28,500 sandhill cranes flew in for the festival. ■ Information: 800-200-2272 or wingsoverwillcox.com. **AAA**

17
JAN



FRANK ZULLO

STAR PARTY

The stars will be out on Mars Hill at Lowell Observatory's Martin Luther King Star Fest on Sunday evening, January 20. After watching a presentation on the current night sky in the John Vickers McAllister Space Theater, view winter's welkin through a variety of telescopes set up around the observatory's campus in Flagstaff. If bad weather prohibits stargazing, indoor programs will proceed as scheduled. ■ Information: 928-774-3358 or lowell.edu.

JAN
20

The Winter Games

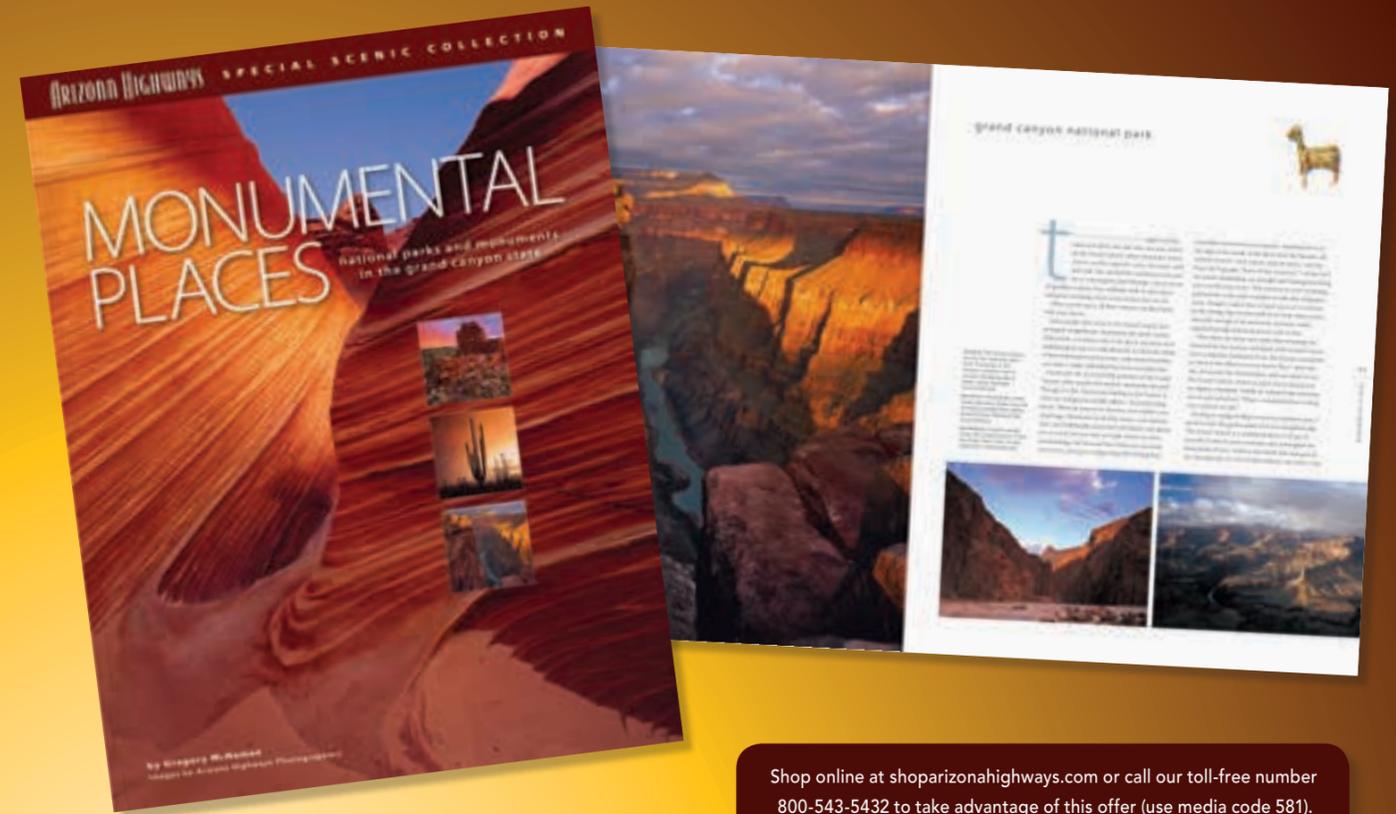
IT'S MAN AND DOGS AGAINST NATURE at the Sixth Annual White Mountain Winter Games. This month, members of the Arizona Mountain Musers compete against one another, guiding dogsled teams through a snowy 3-mile course at Sunrise Park Ski Resort — this is Arizona's version of the Iditarod. Races take place on consecutive days, January 26 and 27, along with other winter activities in the region. In nearby Pinetop, canines put on a show of strength during the Snow Dog Weight Pull, with dogs tugging more than 1,000 pounds in three different weight classes. In addition, children show off their mushing skills during the kids dogsled race. If that's not enough winter fun, bundle up and take a sleigh ride along pristine mountain trails at nearby Blue Sky Stables, or hit the slopes at Sunrise for a dash through the snow. ■ Information: 928-368-4515 or azmm.org.

26
JAN



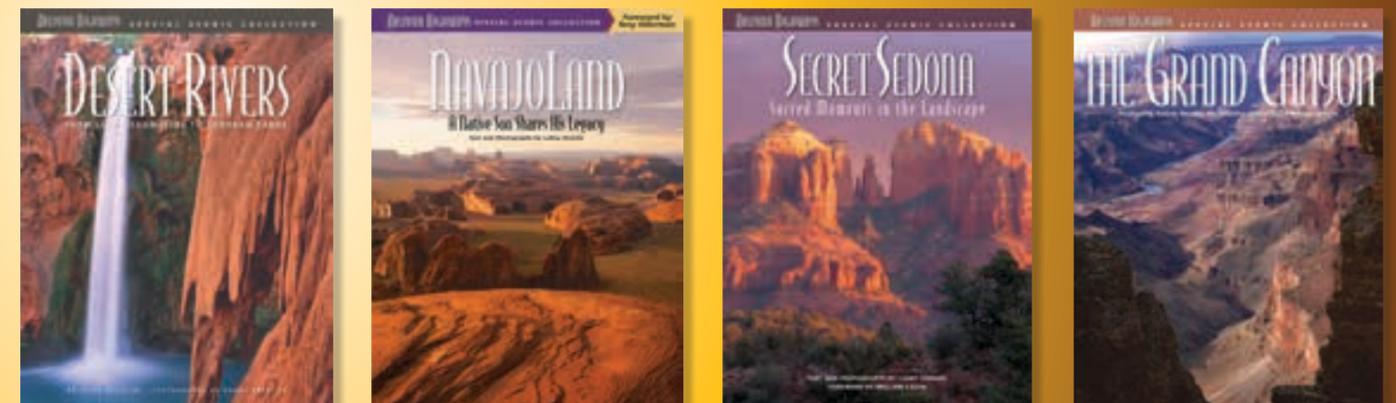
NOMA BLISS

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Weekend GETAWAYS

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO HIT THE ROAD THIS YEAR, AND MAYBE LEARN SOMETHING ALONG THE WAY, LOOK NO FURTHER. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE **25** OF THE STATE'S **BEST** WEEKEND **GETAWAYS**.
BUCKLE UP, AND DRIVE SAFELY.

Ky Kelly Kramer

HERE'S THE THING ABOUT ARIZONA: NO MATTER WHAT DIRECTION YOU GO, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE YOU'LL END UP 180 DEGREES FROM WHERE YOU WERE. FEW STATES, IF ANY, OFFER THE KIND OF DIVERSITY THAT THIS ONE DOES, AND KNOWING WHERE TO GO CAN BE A LITTLE OVERWHELMING. THAT'S WHERE WE COME IN. THIS MONTH, WE'LL TELL YOU ABOUT 25 OF THE STATE'S BEST GETAWAYS. SOME YOU CAN EXPERIENCE IN A COUPLE OF HOURS, AND OTHERS WILL TAKE A DAY OR TWO. EITHER WAY, THERE'S SOMETHING IN HERE FOR EVERYONE. AS YOU'LL SEE, WE'VE DIVIDED THE STATE INTO FIVE REGIONS, WHICH SHOULD HELP YOU FIGURE OUT WHERE TO GO AND WHEN. IN ADDITION, THERE'S A MIX OF MOTHER NATURE, MUSEUMS AND MISCELLANEA. SO, IF YOU WANT TO HIKE IN THE MOUNTAINS, HEAD TO HART PRAIRIE NEAR FLAGSTAFF. IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A DOSE OF HISTORY, HEAD TO THE ROSSON HOUSE IN PHOENIX. AND IF YOU JUST WANT A GOOD GLASS OF WINE, HEAD TO CALLAGHAN VINEYARDS IN ELGIN. OF COURSE, WE'VE ONLY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE, BUT IT'S A START.

North

NORTHERN ARIZONA

1. La Posada Hotel & Gardens

Winslow

When it comes to great dames in Arizona history, famed architect and notorious chain-smoker Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter ranks near the top of the list, having designed six of the most famous structures on the Grand Canyon's South Rim — Bright Angel Lodge, Desert View Watchtower, Hermit's Rest, Hopi House, Lookout Studio and Phantom Ranch. But the real jewel in Colter's crown was La Posada Hotel in Winslow. Commissioned by Fred Harvey, this "last great railroad hotel" was built in 1929 to accommodate travelers on the Santa Fe Railway. And despite a four-decade closure from 1957 to 1997, the newly renovated La Posada is known today as a must-see for Arizona travelers, thanks in large part to its charming hacienda heritage, elegant dining in the Turquoise Room and accommodations so comfortable you'll think you've died and gone to Winslow.

■ For more information: 928-289-4366 or laposada.org.

2. Havasu Falls

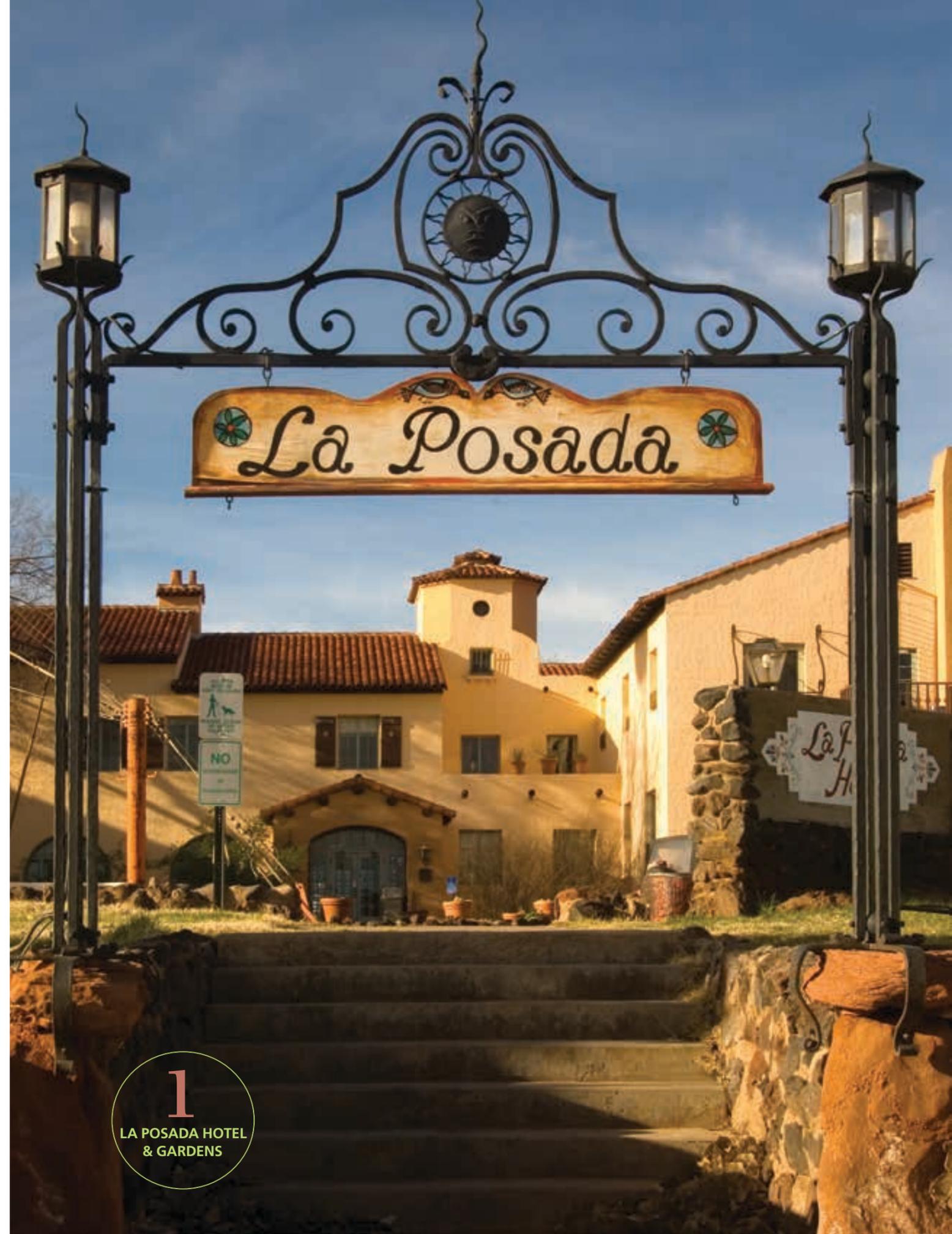
Havasupai Reservation

Water is sacred to the Havasupai people — that's not surprising, considering their name means "people of the blue-green waters." What is surprising, however, is that the water for which they're named isn't surrounding an island in the Caribbean — it's right here in Arizona. Thirty miles west of Grand Canyon Village, Havasu Falls (see our cover) beckons to adventurers looking for a quiet hike to a waterfall that sparkles with colors cast by the concentrated limestone in the falls' waters and the travertine ledges that surround the base of the cascade. Because of the reservation's remote location in the bottom of the Grand Canyon, only 25,000 visitors a year make the trek, and that's good news for hikers, who can enjoy the 10-mile hike from Hualapai Hilltop to Havasu Falls — and its brothers, Navajo and Mooney falls — in relative solitude.

■ For more information: havasufalls.net or havasupaitribe.com.

NICK BEREZEMO

1
LA POSADA HOTEL
& GARDENS





3
KOLB STUDIO

3. Kolb Studio

Grand Canyon National Park

As far as photo subjects go, there's perhaps none as spectacular as the Grand Canyon. Maybe that's why the brothers Kolb — Emery and Ellsworth — decided to settle there in the early 1900s, building a cave in the Canyon wall that served as both darkroom and living quarters. Eventually, the Kolbs built permanent structures to house themselves and their photographs, but after a falling out in the 1920s, Ellsworth lost a coin toss and was forced to move to Los Angeles. Today, Kolb Studio is considered one of the points of pride at the South Rim. Among other things, it contains an exhibit venue, an information center and a bookstore, which features a tribute to the Kolbs' photography of mule riders at the Grand Canyon. Open year-round, the studio is operated by the Grand Canyon Association, a nonprofit organization.

■ *For more information: 800-858-2808 or grandcanyon.org.*

4. Navajo Interactive Museum

Tuba City

In Navajo culture, the number four is sacred, and it's symbolic of the four directions and the four seasons. So, it's only natural that the Navajo Interactive Museum would pay tribute to the revered integer in both design and subject matter. Visitors to the museum begin in the east, exploring Navajo constellations in the Emergence Theater. From there, visitors travel south, then

west, as they take in a full-scale hogan, stories of Navajo origin, rug-weaving patterns and Navajo design. Ultimately, the tour ends in the north, the direction associated with evaluation and assessment. The museum, which first debuted during the 2002 Olympics, reopened in June, and now includes a Navajo Code Talkers Museum and a trading post.

■ *For more information: 928-640-0684 or explorenavajo.com.*

5. Hart Prairie Preserve

Near Flagstaff

Bebb willows aren't just any ordinary willows. In fact, they're uncommonly rare, particularly in Arizona. But at Hart Prairie Preserve, a 245-acre Nature Conservancy property near Flagstaff, you'll find an abundance of the scarce saplings, along with wildflowers, elk, deer, porcupines, prairie dogs, and enough birds to keep your binoculars occupied for hours. You might also encounter wild mushrooms and countless other flora and fauna, especially if you decide to stay for more than a day — a historic lodge and guest cabins provide plenty of space to kick back and enjoy the scenery. What's more, from mid-May to mid-October, guided nature walks traverse the prairie, and photography seminars occur throughout the year.

■ *For more information: 928-774-8892 or nature.org.*

As the oldest school structure in Arizona, Strawberry Schoolhouse (right) offers visitors a glimpse into the region's history. Photograph by Nick Berezenko

N-Central

NORTH-CENTRAL ARIZONA

6. L'Auberge de Sedona

Sedona

If you're a fan of babbling brooks, the symphonic rustle of wind through trees or the splendor of a thousand red rocks, you might become the No. 1 fan of L'Auberge de Sedona. Tucked away on 11 acres along the banks of Oak Creek, L'Auberge is to Sedona what Sedona is to Phoenicians — a serene retreat far from the hustle and bustle of city life. And with 31 private cottages, an award-winning restaurant (L'Auberge Restaurant on Oak Creek) and a spa menu that includes creek-side treatments, it's a weekend getaway that doesn't require much effort, unless, of course, you're game to hike along the hundreds of trails that surround the city, from Bell Rock to Apache Mountain.

■ *For more information: 800-905-5745 or lauberge.com.*

7. Pine-Strawberry Walking Tour

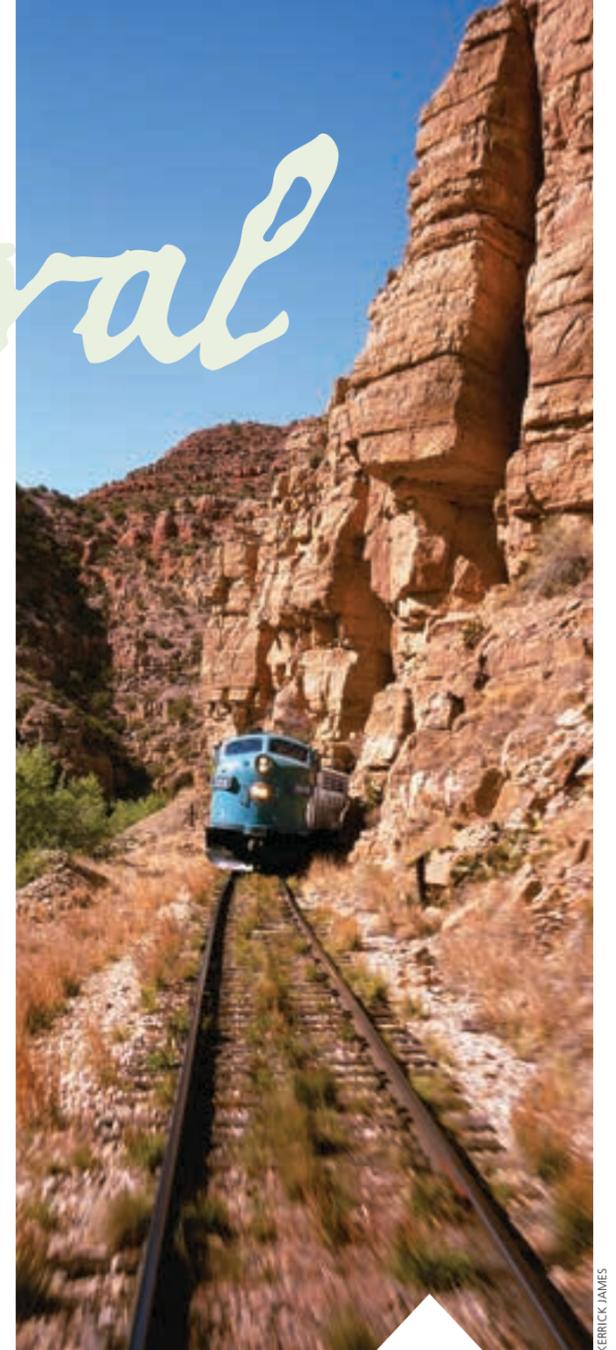
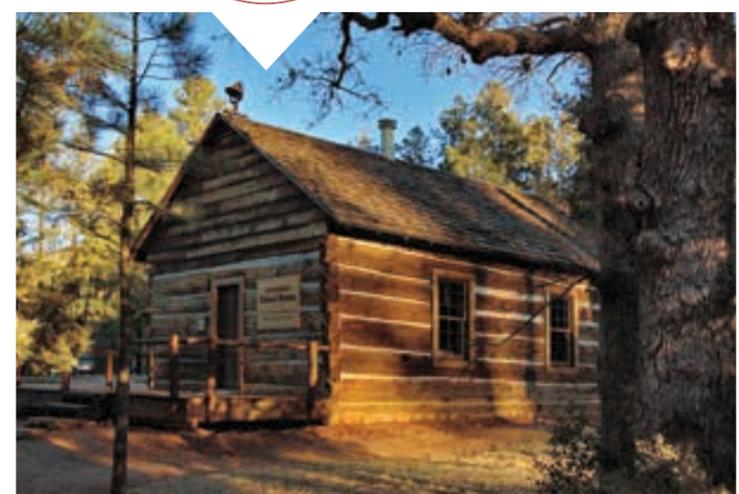
Gila County

As Mormon pioneers settled parts of Arizona in the 19th century, many of them found shelter in the shadow of the Mogollon Rim, and particularly in the tiny hamlets of Pine and Strawberry. Modern-day visitors to the area can retrace the pioneers' steps along the Pine-Strawberry Walking History Trail. A little bit rambling and a whole lot rustic, the trail meanders along Pine and Strawberry creeks, where original settlement homes, the Strawberry Cemetery — the final resting place of at least seven souls —

and the original LDS church still stand in tribute to the area's first non-Native inhabitants.

■ *For more information: 928-476-3547 or pinestrawhs.org.*

7
PINE-STRAWBERRY
WALKING
TOUR



8. Verde Canyon Railroad

Clarkdale

When you discover a copper mine, you'd better find a way for people to find it, mine it and make you millions off of Manifest Destiny — at least that was the philosophy behind the construction of the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad back in 1882, when Jerome was at the pinnacle of the copper boom. Although miners have long stopped venturing to North-Central Arizona, the Verde Canyon Railroad remains, passing regularly between Clarkdale and the ghost town of Perkinsville on modern adventures that feature wine tastings, "Ales on Rails" and "Starlight Tours" evening rides. Seasonal adventures celebrate the state's extensive color palette — from black hawks and great blue herons to thousands of vibrant wildflowers.

■ *For more information: 800-320-0718 or verdecanyonrr.com.*

8
VERDE CANYON
RAILROAD



West

WESTERN ARIZONA

11. Lighthouse Replica Tour

Lake Havasu City

Starship 2010 isn't what it sounds like. In fact, it has nothing to do with intergalactic travel — it's just an aquatic means by which visitors to Lake Havasu can tour the city's eight lighthouse replicas. So, too, is the *Southwest Desert Magic*. And even though the lighthouses that dot the shores of Lake Havasu are far smaller than their East Coast counterparts, they're still perfectly useful, guiding watercraft — big and small alike — into safe harbor. Just in case you needed another excuse to hit the water, this is it.

■ For more information: 928-680-4713 or havasuboattours.com.

12. Cibola National Wildlife Refuge

Cibola

During this time of year, there's no reason for a goose to stay in Canada — it's too cold, too wet and generally too unpleasant for the fine-feathered fowl to endure. That's why most Canada geese migrate, and why a lot of them end up at Cibola National Wildlife Refuge. Located amid the desert washes of the Lower Colorado River, the refuge is home to countless species, both of the four-legged and finned variety, which makes hunting and fishing the main draw for this U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-managed property. Take note, though: Cibola Lake and adjoining lands are closed to the public between Labor Day and March 15.

■ For more information: 928-857-3253 or fws.gov.

13. Cattail Cove State Park

Lake Havasu City

In the world of camping enthusiasts, having a little water around your campsite is the equivalent of having an ocean view suite in Maui. That's what makes Cattail Cove State Park so spectacular. Twenty-eight of the park's 61 campsites are located right on the banks of Lake Havasu, meaning that swimming, boating, fishing, waterskiing and a whole slew of other water activities are at arm's length. Plus, the park offers a number of other amenities, including picnic tables, grills, restrooms with showers, a boat-rental facility and a boat-launch ramp. There are also plenty of hiking opportunities, including the 1.5-mile-long Whytes Retreat Trail, which winds along the lake for views of the Whitsett Pumping Station and Parker Dam.

■ For more information: 928-855-1223 or pr.state.az.us.

15 LONDON BRIDGE

14. Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Lake Mead Area

Arizona's ecosystems are far more diverse than you might imagine, and three of them — the Great Basin, Mohave and Sonoran deserts — meet at Lake Mead. Ecosystems aside, the lake, which was home to several Native American cultures about 10,000 years ago, is also a great place to play. Whether you're a hiker, sightseer or photographer, Lake Mead is a haven for nature-loving explorers. And with countless acres of clear blue water, it's also a great place to rent a speedboat, a paddleboat, kayak or canoe. But boaters beware: Current low water levels can lead to exposed, unmarked reefs, so pay attention and avoid night excursions or high-speed adventures.

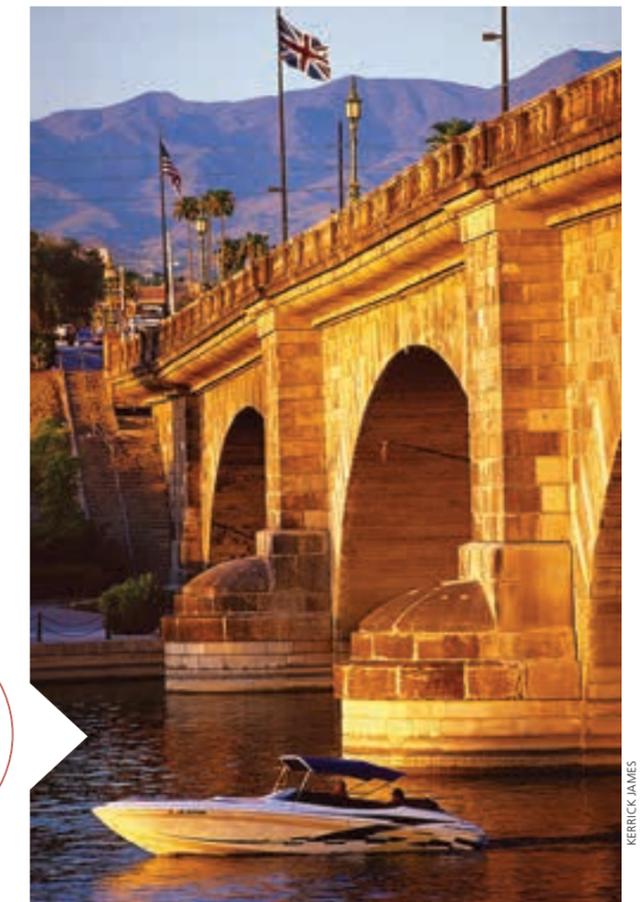
■ For more information: 702-293-8906 or nps.gov/lame.

15. London Bridge

Lake Havasu City

The tiny Western Arizona city of Lake Havasu owns the original London Bridge — no kidding. The acquisition occurred in 1962, when Londoners discovered that the historic overpass was crumbling into the Thames River. Lake Havasu City founder Robert P. McCullough decided to bid on the bridge at auction and won, spending a grand total of \$7 million to transport it to Arizona in 1968. And that was no easy feat — it required the absolute dismantling of the bridge, stone by stone, and shipping across approximately 10,000 miles. By 1971, however, the bridge was completely reconstructed, and it's been a point of interest ever since.

■ For more information: 800-242-8278 or golakehavasu.com.



LES DAVID MANEVITZ

KERICK JAMES

NORTH-CENTRAL ARIZONA *continued*

9. White Mountain Bluegrass Festival

Pinetop-Lakeside

The White Mountain Bluegrass Festival combines the best of banjos and blue skies for one wholly entertaining experience. Now in its 18th year, the festival spans two days in August, and is packed with bluegrass and folk bands. In fact, recent performers have included Lost Highway, The Mill Creek Boys and Whistle Stop. There's enough food to feed armies of cowboy-hatted toe-tappers and plenty of children's activities, workshops and other attractions, too. Plus, it takes place at Hon Dah Resort and Casino, which means two things: The slots are just a few steps away, and camping is plentiful.

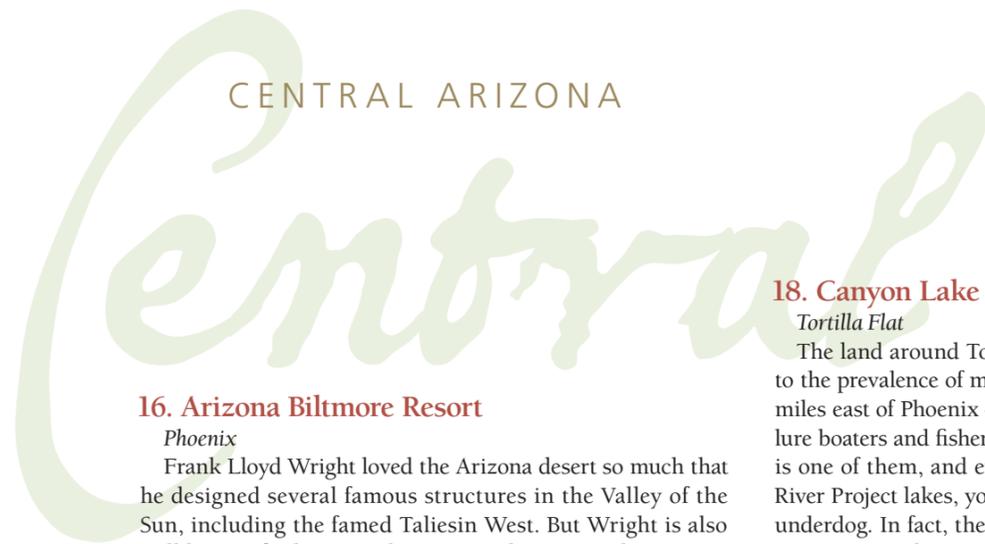
■ For more information: 800-573-4031 or pinetoplakesidechamber.com.

10. Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area

Near Eagar

Chances are that grey foxes, badgers and pronghorn antelopes don't often make an appearance in your backyard. And if they do, you either live in a rural area or in a zoo. But at Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area, all of the aforementioned critters are a dime a dozen, along with ground squirrels, mule deer, skunks and chipmunks, as well as a whole flock of birds — from golden eagles and osprey to broad-tailed hummingbirds and mountain bluebirds. Managed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, many of the area's 1,300 acres are open to hiking, horseback riding, cycling and picnicking — just don't feed the foxes.

■ For more information: 928-367-4281 or azgfd.gov.



16. Arizona Biltmore Resort

Phoenix

Frank Lloyd Wright loved the Arizona desert so much that he designed several famous structures in the Valley of the Sun, including the famed Taliesin West. But Wright is also well known for his 1929 design contributions to the Arizona Biltmore Resort, a Central Phoenix landmark and haven for well-heeled travelers. Snuggled up against the base of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve, there are several reasons the 738-room resort is known as “the jewel of the desert,” among them a championship golf course, gorgeous pools, elegant dining and a deeply steeped sense of tradition and history.

■ For more information: 800-950-0086 or arizonabiltmore.com.

17. Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park

Superior

January is the best time to visit Boyce Thompson Arboretum, when the skies are typically clear, the air is typically crisp and the specialty gardens are always in bloom. Founded in the 1920s, the arboretum was the brainchild of mining magnate Colonel William Boyce Thompson, who discovered the numerous uses of plants during a rugged mission trip to Russia in 1917. Today, the arboretum encompasses approximately 320 acres, and humbly hosts plants, trees and cactuses indigenous to the desert, as well as plenty of wildlife, a hidden canyon and enough pretty scenery to burn through an entire memory card.

■ For more information: 520-689-2811 or pr.state.az.us.

18. Canyon Lake

Tortilla Flat

The land around Tortilla Flat is anything but. And thanks to the prevalence of mountains near this tiny town — just 45 miles east of Phoenix — there are also several waterways that lure boaters and fishers for days of outdoor fun. Canyon Lake is one of them, and even though it’s the smallest of the Salt River Project lakes, you certainly shouldn’t underestimate the underdog. In fact, there’s a designated swimming area, three picnic sites and a campground on-site, as well as a fully loaded marina. But the real feather in Canyon Lake’s cap is its ample fish population, from walleye and largemouth bass to crappie and channel catfish.

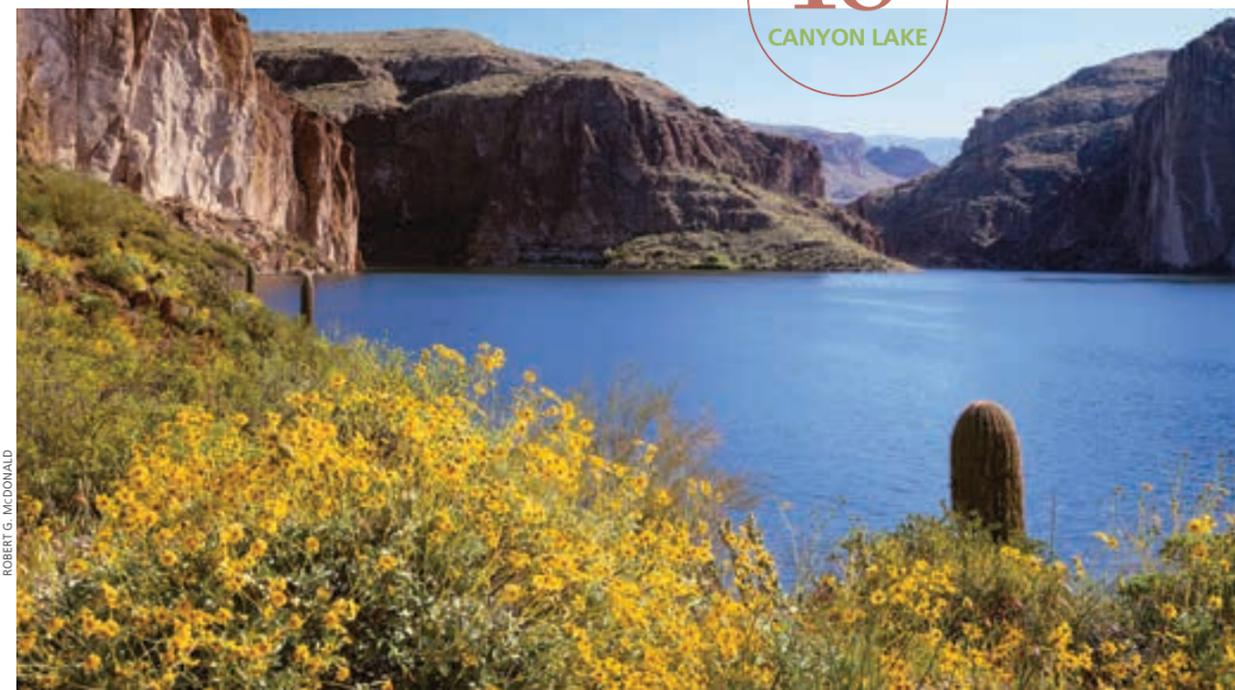
■ For more information: 480-288-9233 or canyonlakemarina.com.

19. Desert Caballeros Western Museum

Wickenburg

Despite the tremendous growth of the Phoenix metropolitan area, one desert community has worked hard to maintain its rustic Western identity. That’s why Wickenburg is the perfect place to house the Desert Caballeros Western Museum, a tribute to the way the West was won and the role Arizona folk played in its settlement. The museum features more than 400 works in its permanent collection, including pieces by famed cowboy and Native American painters and sculptors. But the museum isn’t just a museum — it also sponsors such excursions as the “Going for the Gold Mining Adventure” tour in February, and the “Ghost Town Adventure” tour in March.

■ For more information: 928-684-2272 or westernmuseum.org.



ROBERT G. MCDONALD

20. Rosson House at Heritage Square

Phoenix

Sheltered by the high-rises that occupy downtown Phoenix, Heritage Square pays homage to part of the city’s original town-site with a series of restored, early 20th century homes. Among them is Rosson House, a 2,800-square-foot Eastlake Victorian home that was built in 1895 and features 10 rooms and five fireplaces. Although the Rosson House was occupied by a number of residents of “block 14” during Phoenix’s early days, it’s a museum today, offering visitors from all over the world a glimpse into days gone by. Docent-guided tours are offered five days a week, every hour on the half-hour, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

■ For more information: 602-262-5070 or rossonhousemuseum.org.

21. Arizona Inn

Tucson

It’s safe to say that if you were a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt’s in the 1930s, you were probably a fairly important person. At least that was true of Isabella Greenway, Arizona’s first congresswoman and a good friend of Mrs. Roosevelt herself. But beyond her first-lady familiarity, Greenway was also an advocate for Army veterans, which is why she sponsored construction of the Arizona Inn in 1930. You see, Greenway’s furniture factory faced an uncertain future after the stock market crash of 1929, so the entrepreneur decided to build a hotel, thus creating demand for furniture and saving the jobs of her veteran friends. Today, the inn hosts countless visitors each year — and the furniture is quite fine.

■ For more information: 520-777-0308 or arizonainn.com.

22. Flight of the Cranes

Willcox

In January, there are a lot of wings over Willcox — and we’re not talking about airplanes. We’re talking about sandhill cranes. Thanks to large quantities of water that pool in town between January and March, approximately 25,000 of the birds bed down for the night in the wetlands, resulting in an overwhelming cacophony of squawks when the birds take off at sunrise. During the annual Wings Over Willcox celebration, bird-watchers can get their fill of feathers, whether on their own or on a guided tour.

■ For more information: 800-200-2272.

23. Callaghan Vineyards

Elgin

When it comes to fine wines, most people think immediately of California, or, better yet, France. But give Kent Callaghan and his family a chance by sampling one of their \$4 wine tastings, and you’ll be associating Syrah with Southern Arizona in no time. Since 1990, the Callaghans have been working to produce some

of the finest blends this side of the San Andreas Fault, including Tempranillo-based Spanish blends called “Padres” and Buena Suerte, a blend of Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines are special because the earth in Elgin is sandy and calcified, and it contains a lot of iron, tinting it a deep red. But good soil is nothing without good people to tend it — and the Callaghans are just that.

■ For more information: 520-455-5322 or callaghanvineyards.com.

24. Ramsey Canyon Preserve

Sierra Vista

Seventeen varieties of hummingbirds are known to exist west of the Mississippi, and of those, 14 varieties make their home in Ramsey Canyon, a Nature Conservancy property just east of Sierra Vista. It’s not exactly clear why, but given the way two deserts and two mountain ranges converge in the canyon, it wouldn’t be surprising to discover that the buzzing birds are there for the blossoms. Indeed, the Sierra Madres and the Rocky Mountains meet in Ramsey Canyon, as do the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts, which means there are plenty of Mother Nature’s creations to gander — from mountain lions and rattlesnakes to the aforementioned hummingbirds and bats. The scenery is best viewed from the Hamburg Trail, which runs parallel to Ramsey Creek. Guided tours are offered three days per week, March through October.

■ For more information: 520-378-2785 or nature.org.



TOM VEZO

25. Cochise County Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival

Sierra Vista

When you’re surrounded by the Chiricahua, Mustang and Mule mountains, it makes sense that you’d host a cowboy festival — after all, it’s all about ambience. So that’s exactly what the town of Sierra Vista does. From February 1 to 3, Sierra Vista will host its 16th annual Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival, and people will come from all over the country to listen to tales of life on the range and songs about good horses, good women and even better whiskey. Why? Because this festival isn’t about celebrating city slickers; it’s about celebrating honest-to-goodness, dyed-in-the-wool cowboys and cowgirls.

■ For more information: 520-249-2511 or cowboypoets.com. **AH**

Kelly Kramer is a Phoenix-based writer who loves to hit the road in her Xterra. This is her first assignment for Arizona Highways.

White Space

There are people around the country — we won't name names — who think of the Arizona landscape as nothing more than a giant hole in the ground surrounded by sand dunes. They think there's only one season, and snow is unheard of. Of course, if those folks would ever set foot here, they'd see that Arizona is the most beautiful place in the world, and when it comes to snow, we can certainly hold our own.





Mystic Rock Even softened by snow and winter mist, 800-foot-tall Spider Rock forms a commanding presence as one of Canyon de Chelly's most sacred Navajo sites (page 25). Photograph by Claire Curran

Last Light Snowy ponderosa pines stand in blue-tinged shadows, while the San Francisco Peaks reflect the setting sun. Photograph by Robert G. McDonald



Icing the Cliffs Shadows hug the interior walls of the Grand Canyon below Yavapai Point as morning clouds linger over its sun- and snow-laden upper reaches (left). Photograph by Chuck Lawsen

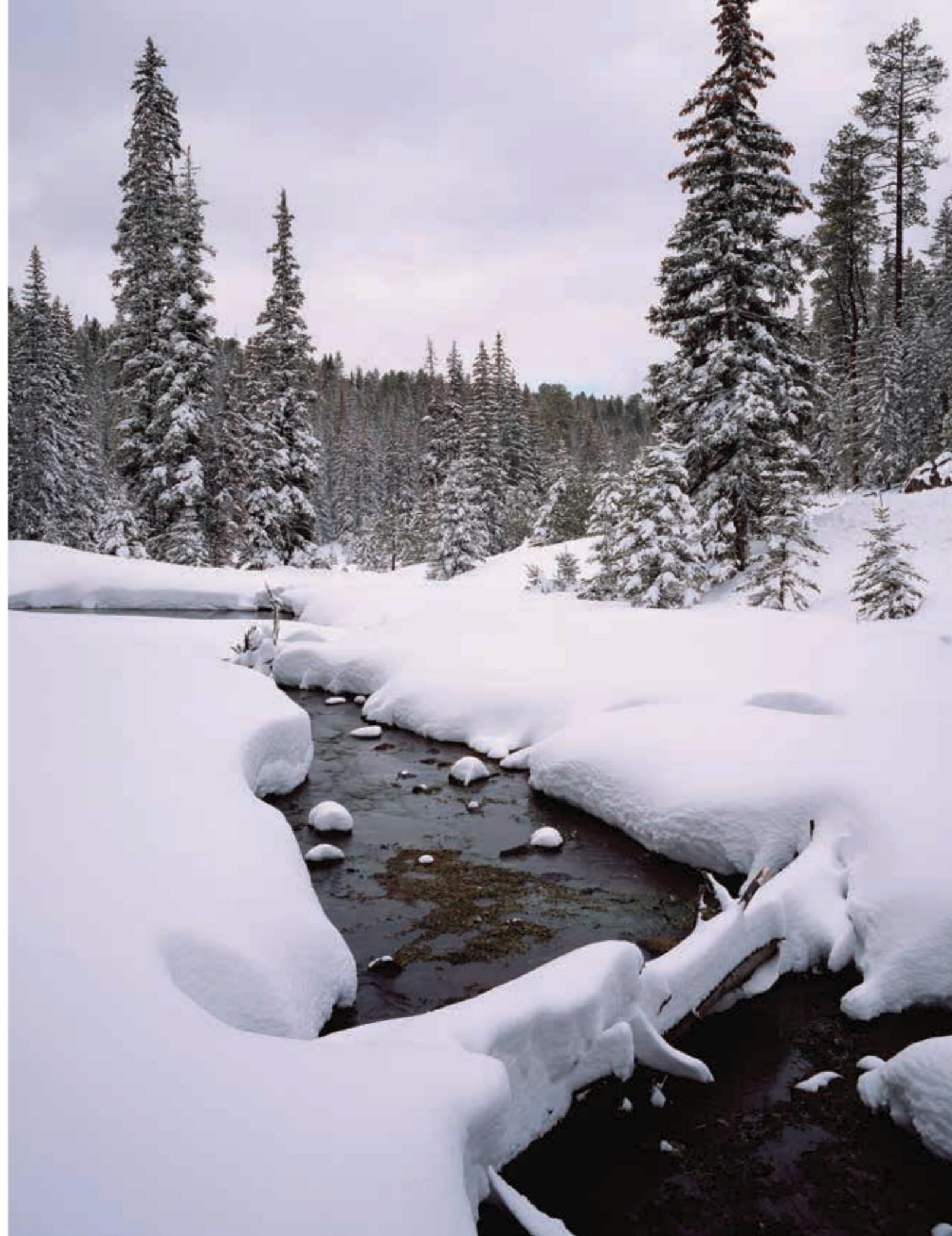
Cape of Cold Spiny, snow-flocked ocotillo skeletons bear little resemblance to their springtime presentations as tall, green, leafy canes topped with red flamelike blooms. Photograph by Thomas Wiewandt



Pastel Sea Bathed in pastels from the rising sun, an ocotillo in snow (left) appears like crystallized seaweed on a frosty ocean floor. Photograph by Thomas Wiewandt

Still as Stone With virtually no underbrush available for cover, a cottontail rabbit (below) tucks itself into a furry ball and tries to avoid detection by its natural enemies. Photograph by Tom Bean

A Patch of Blue Clearing storm clouds lift over Hannagan Creek (right), leaving behind a thick and pristine blanket of winter white. Photograph by Edward McCain



Opportunity, Please Knock!
Constantly on the prowl, an opportunistic coyote
explores a mountain meadow near Flagstaff in
search of food. Photograph by Tom Bean



Ephemeral Lace
The fine lacy look of the Sonoran Desert west of
Tucson rarely lasts for long following a snowfall.
Photograph by Thomas Wiewandt 





Seventh Natural Wonderland

BY MICHAEL ENGELHARD PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATE THOMPSON

In the meadow, there are a couple of things you can do: You can build a snowman and pretend that he is Parson Brown, or you can slap on a pair of cross-country skis and hit the trail. We suggest the latter, in particular, at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. The snow-covered meadows are spectacular, and the backdrop is out of this world.

THROUGH THE WOODS A skier explores the Walhalla Glade Trail. In January, the average high temperature at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon hovers around 3 degrees.





It's morning on the Grand Canyon's North Rim, and as I poke my head through the flap of my tent, I find the campsite muffled by cloudbanks. Already, Kate, our photographer, hovers near the edge, eager to capture the light of morning with her camera. By the time I've wriggled into my ski pants and started the coffee, there's movement in the abyss. Wet shrouds drag across ponderosa pine-clad slopes. Where the fabric thins, sun bleeds through in an amorphous smear.

Elsewhere, openings in the trees expose Toroweap Formation ridges and pinnacles perched atop raw-boned Coconino sandstone scarps. To the northeast, a thick broth spills across the Painted Desert, barely contained by the glow of Vermilion and Echo cliffs.

A true *Götterdämmerung* — a dawn stirred by sullen gods, a scene Wagner himself could not have staged better.

It comes as no surprise that the Grand Canyon, and the North Rim in particular, inspired heroic nomenclature. Geologist Francois Emile Matthes, a naturalized American born in Holland and charged with producing the Canyon's first topographic maps, named the locale of our weeklong ski tour.

In Nordic mythology, Valhalla was the "Hall of the Slain," abode of the god Odin (also called Wotan), and paradise for warriors killed in battle. Still veiled from our sight, this frosty otherworld juts from the main rim east of the visitors center, flanked by Bright Angel Canyon. Like a misshapen lobster claw, it pinches the Colorado River where it swings from a north-south to an east-west orientation. Theories to explain the river's crookedness or the remnant plateau speak of headward erosion, drainage reversal, rate of uplift... but nobody knows for sure.

More certain are the steep-pitched routes from Cape Royal — the mesa's southernmost tip — down Unkar Creek into the inner gorge that gave Ancestral Puebloan farmers access to

permanent water and soil fit for corn.

As the cloud screen dissolves, Kate's partner joins us at the overlook. Andy is along for companionship and some Arizona-style skiing, but he's also carrying a heavy load: camp gear and photographic equipment in a search-and-rescue sled. Both are thrilled at this winter wonderland opportunity, because, normally, they experience the Canyon differently — as river guides more than a mile below.

Snow conditions looked iffy two days earlier. Our original plan was to drive the trucks from Jacob Lake as far as possible on the unplowed road. Expecting bottomless drifts, we piggybacked two snowmobiles that would get us to the park boundary, beyond which they're not permitted. To our surprise, we were able to drive the trucks where we needed to go.

In DeMotte Campground's broad meadow, two coyotes were sniffing for gophers along a brown south-facing bench. A Forest Service sign spelled out the fire danger — Low! After our shuttle drivers left us by the roadside, we began rigging the sleds and putting on our skis. Silence poured in, amplified by the trickling of water down ice-rutted macadam.

Geared up, we crossed asphalt patches and jokingly followed the yellow centerline. We slowed on the downhill, compelled by blacktop that threatened to stop us dead and strip our skis'

bottoms. Icy stretches provided zero traction. Curves in the shade — untouched by afternoon sun — required trail breaking. Windfall forced us to scramble, 50-pound sleds in tow. Seduced into the brush, we foundered in snow sumps, thigh-deep in powder. Nightfall surprised us near a thawed, sopping campsite. The following morning, tent stakes were stuck in the frozen ground.

Was this climate change, or simply bad timing? I'd attempted this trip the previous year, but after waiting in vain until mid-February, I returned home to Alaska to a place where I can ski from my porch until Easter. A week later, the North Rim was hit with 3 feet of snow.

The next day, we skied Walhalla Glades — a peninsula forming one of the lobster claw's pincers — to peer into the gorge's Redwall limestone wound. The Canyon was spitting fat flakes at us from below. Snowmelt from the peninsula's edge filters through porous Kaibab limestone, gushing from cliffs at Cheyava Falls, which feed Clear Creek, a tributary of the Colorado River.

At the edge, we stood over a mountain lion print. Snow, as clumpy as cottage cheese, quickly filled in the paw's outline. Without warning, lightning pulsed, followed by thunderclaps. A nearby ponderosa stood cored, a black cleft running down its spine. Lightning kindles most wildfires on the North Rim, and

FEET FIRST A misty panorama drops away below the Natchi Canyon Overlook (left) on the Canyon's North Rim.

OUT OF BOUNDS A small sign reminds skiers to stay within the park boundaries on the Arizona Trail (below).

electric storms can strike any time of the year. Under another salvo, we hurried to camp to cook dinner.

The Norse gods are smiling at Roosevelt Point. After a night of freight-train gusting that had me fretting about "widow makers," the Rim shines like a bride beneath puffy clouds. Airborne frost flickers in imitation of sequins, and the snowline descends to the top of the Redwall formation. Pine stumps and charred trunks near the brink betray elemental forces at work — fire and wind. Etched in white, the landscape resembles a copper engraving.

Navajo Mountain bulges across the void, miles away. Blue Moon Bench, Shinumo Altar and a crosshatching of dirt roads on the South Rim mark the plateau, which unrolls into the flat distance. Even the squirrels that chewed a hole in one of the food bags can't dampen my spirit.

Taking advantage of the fresh dusting, we decide to leave our tents and sleds and push for Cape Royal, a 20-mile round-trip. The new snow cover keeps a perfect record of creatures that passed through the night. Cottontail, mouse and squirrel tracks stitch the surface. A bobcat stepped "in register," carefully placing hind feet into the depressions left by its front paws, in typical cat behavior. Coyote prints intersect those of some rodent, leading to a pink stain in the snow. I cut a swath of my own through the fluff and eventually spooked the trickster as he crosses the road.

Leapfrogging with Andy and Kate, I get into "the zone" — a condition known to and craved by every cross-country skier. Arms and legs start to move as steady as pistons, working in sync



... a dawn stirred by sullen gods, a scene
Wagner himself could not have staged better.



MAGIC MOMENT As a storm clears near Roosevelt Point, red rock formations of the Grand Canyon come into view (opposite page).

FRESH SNOW A cross-country skier (left) pulls an expedition sled along the snow-covered road leading into the Walhalla Plateau on the North Rim, where archaeologists discovered more than 100 farm sites dating from A.D. 1050 to 1150.

RAW DEAL After a long day of skiing, Andy Hutchinson (below) inspects the blisters on his weary feet.



with my lungs. I submit to the detached rhythm of push-glide, push-glide until it becomes effortless. Cloud rags drift through trees, and I consider racing them. Endorphins flood every cell.

At last the mind stills, cleared by the sighing of wind in pine needles, the hissing of skis, the tapping of white-bibbed nut-hatches, the rasping of Stellar's jays. Unbroken, the trail's ribbon stretches ahead, spawning illusions of being first and alone, obliterating the tarmac, as well as the presence of companions. Brightened by aspen groves, the forest appears mature and less ravaged here than near the storm-beaten viewpoints.

But our bliss can't last. As we lose elevation, as the sun climbs and we approach the rim, we run into bare spots again. Sticky snow gloms onto our skis, pine duff as well, and possibly topsoil. Andy, who forgot his wax kit, applies a stick of butter — to no avail. Reluctant to twist ankles, we ditch our gear and continue on foot.

Past the Cape Final turnoff we come upon the remains of a small pueblo inhabited between A.D. 1050 and 1150 by Kayenta Anasazi, likely ancestors of the Hopi. Low walls trace a dozen rooms, hearths, garden plots and a fire pit. Archaeologists unearthed four human skeletons with grave goods here: ceramic vessels, a bracelet of shale and turquoise beads. A 1930s survey yielded close to 100 sites scattered across the Walhalla Glades. More were discovered along Unkar Creek, all the way to its delta, one of the inner Canyon's most densely populated areas. Warm air rising from the chasm lengthened the growing season on the plateau. Mule deer and piñon nuts provided protein for commuters between the river and the Rim.

I've been scanning the woods for one of their secretive denizens, but other than zipper tracks leading to and from pine trees, I haven't seen a sign. Then, from the corner of my eye, when I least expect it, I see the flash of a bushy tail — an impression of weasel swiftness. A Kaibab squirrel dashes across sunlit snow, pursuing a mate. The tassel-eared, black-bellied rodent is endemic to the North Rim and Kaibab National Forest, separated from its cousin — the more widespread Abert's squirrel — by topography and millennia of divergent evolution.

The supercharged creature is a link in one of nature's amazing webs of interdependency. It digs up and nibbles on truffles, the fruiting bodies of fungi that attach themselves to the rootlets of ponderosas. Passing through the squirrel's digestive tract, the spores are deposited throughout the forest, accompanied by a bonus package of fertilizer. The fungi in turn assist ponderosas with the absorption of nutrients and water from the soil. Pinecone seeds, buds and the inner bark from twigs make up the bulk of the squirrel's diet — the little chatterboxes also find

shelter in ball-shaped nests built from the trees' materials.

Toward afternoon, we reach Angels Window, pried open in a limestone fin by freeze-and-thaw cycles. It frames a toffee-colored slice of the Colorado River. The vegetation is that of the upper Sonoran life zone. Cliffrose. Sagebrush. Currant.

Sapsuckers have mined a Utah juniper trunk as if riddling it with buckshot. Atop the natural arch, a thin coating of frost covers piñon boughs, and the wind cuts through layers of clothing. Looking at the fractured rock strata that unravels from this point, I can't help but admire those who farmed up here, then trekked down to Unkar Delta in sandals braided from yucca fiber, urged by snow flurries, carrying toddlers, pots, mats, deer skins, water, provisions and a summer's memories.

Late in the day, we return to our cached skis. Our shadows have grown gaunt. Oblique rays throw individual snow granules into relief. Chickadees let go of the day with plaintive two-note calls. By the time we reach Roosevelt Point, alpenglow ignites the rim.

During our five days of skiing, we encountered water in its many forms: as sleet, slush, firm, graupel, powder, rime, hoar. As clouds. Evaporating. But never enough in the crystallized dry form that makes skiing so spectacular. As if to mock us, Odin and his cohorts dump loads of perfect snow on the North Rim as we head home, and we almost become snow-bound. ■■

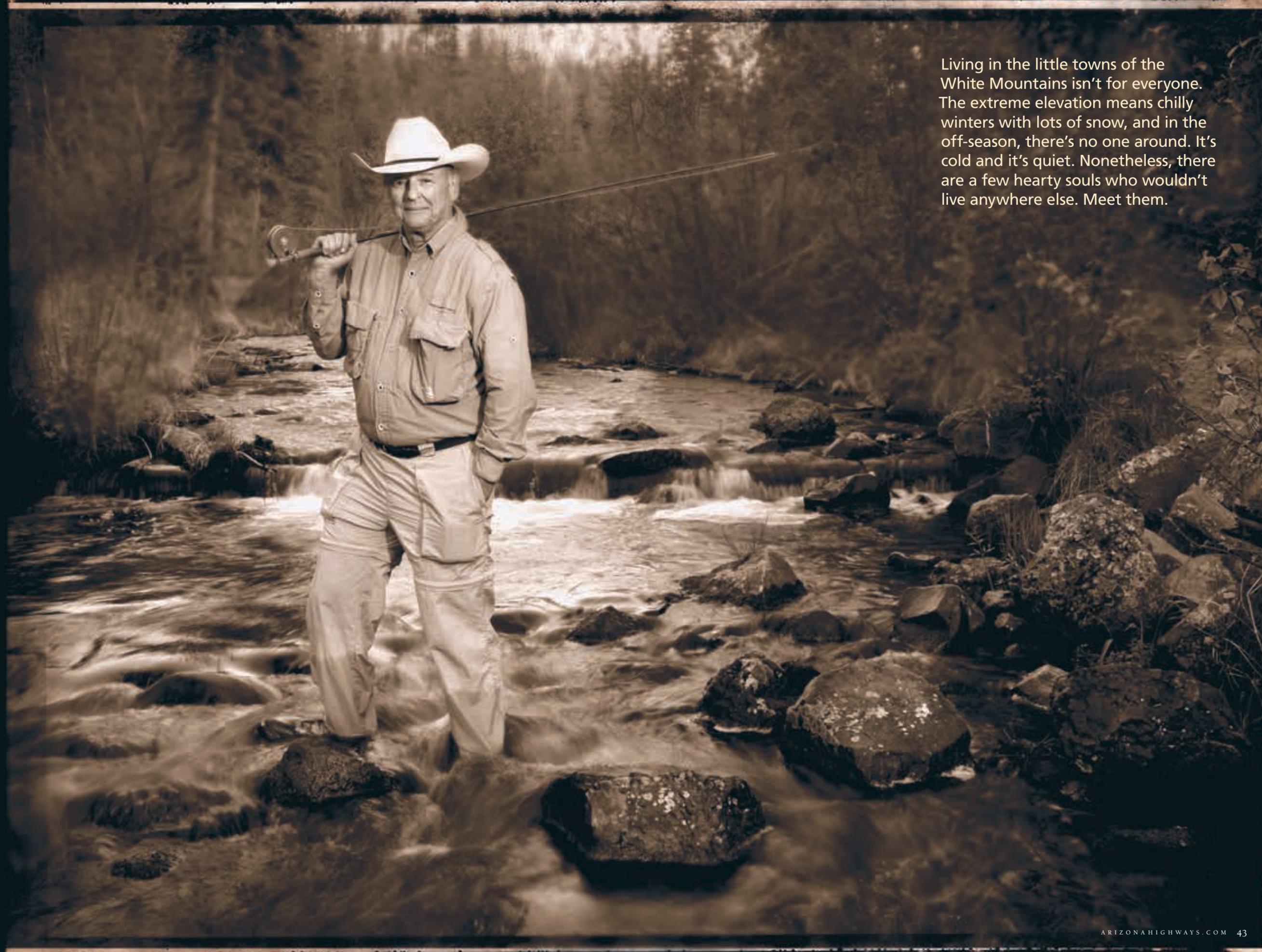
■ For more information on skiing the North Rim, call the Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center at 928-643-7298, or visit nps.gov/grca or fs.fed.us/rs/kai/.

Michael Engelhard is a wilderness guide and the author of two books. He lives in Alaska, where six months of snow are considered normal.

Kate Thompson says there's never a dull moment while working on a story like this. Extreme weather always presents interesting challenges — fogged lenses, frozen fingers. ... She's learned to expect the unexpected and always keeps a good sense of humor as a secret weapon.

THE HIGH LIFE

By Tom Carpenter Photographs by David Zickl



Living in the little towns of the White Mountains isn't for everyone. The extreme elevation means chilly winters with lots of snow, and in the off-season, there's no one around. It's cold and it's quiet. Nonetheless, there are a few hearty souls who wouldn't live anywhere else. Meet them.

LIVING IN PARADISE ISN'T EASY. IF IT WERE, EVERYONE WOULD live in the White Mountains, a place that combines stunning natural beauty, water, wide-open spaces, cold winters, busy summers, and a connection to the land that's deep and abiding.

The White Mountains of Eastern Arizona rise like a hunched back at the southern end of the Mogollon Rim. Actually, it's more like a region of high ground than a mountain range. Still, two mountains do protrude like a pair of shoulder blades. Mount Baldy, with an elevation of about 11,400 feet, ranks as the second-highest peak in Arizona (second to Humphreys Peak near Flagstaff), and it's the spiritual and emotional core of the area for the White Mountain Apaches. Nearby Escudilla Mountain, elevation 10,912 feet, stands about 30 miles east of Mount Baldy, and is among the top five highest peaks in the state. Both are magnets for moisture — while Arizona averages less than 12 inches of rain annually, some areas in the White Mountains get more than 36 inches a year.

Every winter, moisture gathers in heaps of snow. In the spring, it melts and flows to the rest of the state via rivers and creeks with names like the Little Colorado, the Black, the Blue, the White, the Silver and the Salt.

The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests comprise much of the region. The western and southern edges lie within the White Mountain Apache Reservation. Several communities dot the White Mountains area landscape: Alpine, Eagar, Greer, Hannagan Meadow, Heber, Lakeside, McNary, Nutrioso, Overgaard, Pinetop, Show Low, Snowflake, Springerville, St. Johns and Vernon. A tally of 2000 census figures put the population of the White Mountains at approximately 32,000.

A Man Who Loves to Fish

Chip Chipman and his wife, Penny, have lived in Nutrioso since 1997, when Chip retired after 20 years of teaching special education at Fowler Elementary School in Phoenix. "We were looking for a house with a good barn for the horses," Chip says. "We bought it in 1995, and moved here when I retired. We've lived here ever since."

The town of Nutrioso, according to Penny, "has 230 full-time residents, and 500 during the summer months." She smiles as she describes it as "a bedroom community for Springerville."

Penny, a retired nurse, is originally from upstate New York. Chip comes from Maine and three generations of lobster fishermen, and there's still a hint of New England in his voice after all these years in the West.

Chip is a gentle, patient man with an infectious smile. Friends convinced him to try the fishing-guide business, and over the years, that business has grown with his renown. He's been

FISHIN' CHIP Fly-fishing guide Chip Chipman gets his feet wet in the trout-filled West Fork of the Little Colorado River (preceding panel, pages 42 and 43). "I like the solitude and the ambience of being in mountain streams," he says. "Trout live in beautiful places."

RANCH DRESSING Brian and Brenda Crawford (right) are dressed for the part outside their home and barn in the Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area, where he's the manager. Perks of the job: surveying elk by horseback and spotting wildlife.





FAMILY TIES Sug Peters (above) and her sister, Wink Crigler, run two ranches in the White Mountains, Wink's X Diamond Ranch and Sug's MLY Ranch, named after their grandmother, Mollie Butler and her MLY brand.

featured on television, and his fishing columns are popular throughout Arizona and New Mexico.

"Guiding comes in bunches," Chip explains. He stays busy from first thaw until late fall. When the streams start to freeze and the guiding business dwindles, he and Penny like to go on cruises. When they get back to Nutrioso, Chip serves as the director of fly-fishing at the Greer Lodge. He also guides and conducts fly-casting lessons through his business, Arizona Mountain Fly Fishing. This is a man who loves to fish, and if you want to find him, chances are he's hip-deep in the East Fork of the Black River, getting ready to land another one.

Her Grandmother Was Mollie Butler

The South Fork of the Little Colorado River flows through the MLY Ranch in a low canyon that's barely visible south of State Route 260 between Greer and Eagar.

Sug Peters runs the ranch with her husband, Bobby. Her father started calling her Sugar when she was young. "I didn't know I had another name until I went to school," she says. Her parents were Vince and Helen Butler, and her grandmother was Mollie Butler. The Molly Butler Lodge in Greer opened its doors in 1910, when Mollie and her husband, John, welcomed hunters and fishermen who wanted to tap into John's skills as a guide. The lodge is still in business.

Other than her time away at school, Sug has lived in the area her entire life. She attended a one-room schoolhouse in Greer. "I wasn't old enough to go, but in the state of Arizona, you have to have seven kids to keep the public school open, and they only had six."

Her parents sent her to live with "Grandma," Mollie Butler, in Greer. "I was in first grade and my cousin Dick was in eighth grade," she says. "We rode this little old white horse named Speck from Grandma's up to the schoolhouse. We'd get on him and ride him bareback to the school, and then we'd turn him loose and he'd go home back to Grandma's house — right in front of the lodge there was horse pasture. Then we'd walk home after school."

Sug married Bobby in 1972. "It was love at first sight," she remembers. "We both loved the outdoors, loved to hunt. That was a really wet year. It rained and rained and rained and rained, and one day the rain turned to snow, and big flakes came down and the snow built up and by October 31 or so, there was 4 feet of snow on the level at the Alpine Divide. We'd been deer hunting every day. The snow was too deep to hunt, so we said, 'Well, we'll go get married.'"

They have four daughters and four grandchildren. Bobby is a contractor during the week and a musician on the weekends. Sug retired from teaching kindergarten in Springerville after 25

The "meatloaf axiom" is applicable even in the White Mountains. Simply stated: "If a restaurant has the nerve to put meatloaf on its menu, the discerning diner is obliged to try it."

years, and stays busy running nearly 100 head of cattle on their ranch and managing two cabins, which they rent to people who want to get away from it all. The older of the two cabins was built in the 1870s.

Sug and Bobby are typical of the folks who live in the White Mountains. Through Bobby's contracting business, they benefit from development, but they also see the impact it has on the land they cherish.

Sug explains: "When I was kid and lived on the mountain with my dad in a cow camp, we could be there for days and maybe see the sheepherders way off, or the Apache cowboys would come over because some of their cattle was on us, or we'd go over to their camp and get our cattle." Otherwise, the mountains were vacant.

"I guess, unfortunately, I grew up thinking we owned the whole world. It was our place and our responsibility. My dad was the best caretaker the world ever had. He was awarded several times — cattleman of the year — for the way he looked at the land, and the long term, and how things need to be and how you could protect them. I guess I soaked up too much of it."

"I Had a Blessed Childhood"

The Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area makes up a piece of the White Mountains' "promised land." Brenda Crawford lives there with her husband, Brian, an employee of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. He's also the manager at Sipe. Her parents, Norm and Peg Mead, spent their honeymoon in the White Mountains in 1947. The newlyweds settled in Mesa, but were determined to find a way to make the White Mountains their home away from home. In 1954, they launched a visitors guide to the area called *Arizona's White Mountains*.

"My parents had no idea how to begin, but they were young and optimistic," Brenda says. "That first issue had so many mistakes, a local English teacher held a contest for her students to see who could find the most errors." The guide improved dramatically the second year, and continues to be one of the best publications focusing on the White Mountains.

"I had a blessed childhood," Brenda says. "We spent every summer up here selling advertising and going on excursions for stories." Even today, Brenda still writes stories and sells advertising for the guide, and her father and brother continue to publish it.

Order the Meatloaf

The "meatloaf axiom" is applicable even in the White Mountains. Simply stated: "If a restaurant has the nerve to put meatloaf on its menu, the discerning diner is obliged

to try it." When Pauline Merrill, the owner of the Rendezvous Diner in Greer, puts meatloaf on her menu, the diner definitely isn't disappointed. Like everything else she serves at her rustic restaurant, the meatloaf is homemade and delicious.

Pauline was born in Springerville and graduated from Round Valley High School. She first came to Greer in 1982. "When I was in high school," she recalls, "I'd come here and work as a server at the Molly Butler Lodge." She continued to work as a server until about six years ago, when she seized the opportunity to buy a diner of her own.

"I don't need tons and tons of money in order to be happy," she says. "As long as I can pay my bills and live in Greer, and I'm able to provide the people who work with me a decent living, [that's all I need]. I know what it's like to be on the other end of the line where you're a server making 10 bucks in tips per day, and you still have rent to pay and you're raising kids."

"The best thing about living in Greer is the beauty of it," she says, as her faces lights up. "I wake up every day — I live on the side of the mountain — and every day is like *ahhh*. There's not a day goes by that isn't incredibly beautiful. I've been out here for more than 20 years, and it never ceases to amaze me." **AH**

Tom Carpenter lives in Flagstaff. He understands high-altitude living, and he'd move even higher if he could.

David Zickl lives in the desert community of Fountain Hills, so standing in the icy waters of a high mountain stream was a cool, refreshing shock to his system.



DINNER BELLE Pauline Merrill presides over her Rendezvous Diner, housed in one of Greer's oldest buildings, constructed in 1909. The décor, including beveled glass windows, remains much as it was when the restaurant launched 30 years ago.



WRIGHT FROM THE START

BY LAWRENCE W. CHEEK ::: PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID H. SMITH

Seventy years ago this month, Frank Lloyd Wright began unveiling what many consider to be his most impressive work ever. Taliesin West was designed as a home and a school, and seven decades later, it's still going strong — young architects from around the world continue flocking to North Scottsdale to learn their trade in a compound created by the master.

DROP ALMOST ANY ARCHITECT into the unfamiliar, seemingly hostile environment of the Sonoran Desert, and his or her instinctive reaction will be to design something defensive — something to fend off the scorching sun, keep the critters at bay and swaddle the building's occupants in a wrap of psychological comfort by reminding them of a softer, more civilized land.

Frank Lloyd Wright's reaction, which began taking shape in the desert north of Scottsdale 70 years ago this month, was nothing of the sort. It was nothing of any sort ever seen before. Taliesin West had no antecedent in the history of architecture, and even in Wright's own career the only rehearsal for it was a cluster of tentlike cabins built nine years earlier south of Phoenix. Taliesin West is not only Wright's most original work, it may also be his greatest — fearless, beautiful, embracing a whole philosophical world and bonded almost spiritually to its setting.

"Taliesin West, to me, is a place that came right out of his gut," says Vernon Swaback, a Scottsdale architect who apprenticed with Wright in 1957, and lived in the Taliesin Fellowship for the next 22 years. "What he wrote later was just concocted to explain it to the public. I think the desert just spoke to him, and he created something right for it."

Wright first visited Arizona from Wisconsin in 1928 to "consult" on the textile block construction of the Arizona Biltmore. Albert Chase McArthur, who had begun his career as a draftsman in Wright's Oak Park, Illinois, office in 1907, was the architect. Wright's Olympian ego rendered him spectacularly unsuited as a consultant to anyone, and the relationship lasted just four months. The elegant guest cottages are likely Wright's design; the main building is McArthur's. More significantly, Wright's first Arizona winter led to a relationship with another hotel developer, Alexander Chandler, who hired him to design a world-class resort on the southern slope of what is now Phoenix's South Mountain Park.

Wright and an entourage of family and draftsmen returned

SUBLIME DESIGN Taliesin West and its pool — intended for putting out fires and other practical purposes, including cooling the desert breezes — form triangles that mirror the shape of the peaks behind. "The desert abhors the straight, hard line," Wright said.

to Arizona in 1929 to design the hotel. Instead of renting apartments, they quickly cobbled together a desert camp that Wright called "Ocatilla," misspelling the name of the spidery, flowering shrub (ocotillo) that flourished on the site. It consisted of 15 wooden cabins with asymmetrical white canvas roofs and scarlet flaps in lieu of windows.

Wright claimed to love the "agreeable diffusion of light" that the translucent canvas afforded, but it also was an economic necessity — he was broke, as usual. Still, the cabins accomplished something that no non-Indian architecture in the Southwest had done before: They harmonized with the land by abstracting nature's own forms, the pointy ridgelines and slopes of the camp's mountain backdrop.

The resort erupted from Wright's pencils as nothing less than a complete design vocabulary and ethic for desert architecture, but the stock market crash of October 1929 demolished Chandler's fortune. The hotel wasn't built, Wright saw only \$2,500 of his \$40,000 fee, and local Indians — Wright assumed this, at least — carted off Ocatilla's remains for shelter or firewood.

But a potent seed had germinated. Camping in the desert for five months had infused Wright with that "gut" feeling for the landscape. "The spiritual cathartic that was the desert worked — swept the spirit clean of stagnant ways and habitual forms ready for fresh adventure," he wrote. That adventure would be Taliesin West.

Back in Wisconsin, Wright contracted pneumonia during the winter of 1935-1936, and a physician told his third wife, Olgivanna, that if he would migrate to Arizona every winter it would prolong his life by 20 years. Because Wright was already 68, this was either kindly optimism or eerie prescience. (He lived 23 more years, the most productive of his life.) The following December, the Wrights trundled to Phoenix to prospect for land, and in January 1938 they bought acreage at the foot of a small mountain 10 miles north of Scottsdale. The isolation was essential; Wright reviled cities as "vampires," "tumors" and "monster leviathans." No utilities or water? No problem. Wright hired a driller to sink a well — the gamble paid off at the fright-

ening depth of 478 feet — and wired the fellowship back in Wisconsin to:

... BRING SHOVELS, RAKES, HOES, AND ALSO HOSE. EIGHTEEN DRAFTING BOARDS AND TOOLS... OIL STOVES FOR COOKING AND HEATING, WATER HEATER, VIOLA, CELLO, RUGS NOT IN USE AND WHATEVER ELSE WE NEED.

Wright set up the drafting tables on the site, drawing on brown butcher paper to cut the glare. His “boys,” the apprentices in his private architecture school, provided most of the construction labor. Everyone, Mr. and Mrs. Wright included, camped onsite.

Apprentice Cornelia Brierly, decidedly female but regarded as one of the “boys,” recalled that packrats would whisk away her jewelry, trading the shiny pieces for pebbles. Mustangs would

common in deserts, essentially is cement.) For the walls, Wright had his “boys” raid the site for its colorful quartzite boulders and mine the arroyos for sand.

Wright would orchestrate the precise placement of the boulders in the plywood forms, and then concrete would be poured around them. The walls cost almost nothing and harmonized exquisitely with the surrounding landscape. Frugality was ever the watchword. Once a wall was in place, the apprentices would break down the forms and reuse them. “When the pieces finally got too small, we’d burn them in a 50-gallon drum to keep warm,” Roy recalls.

In a typical trumpet blast of grandiosity, published in *An Autobiography*, Wright wrote, “Our new desert camp belonged to the Arizona desert as though it had stood there during creation.”

them 8 inches.) Taliesin West is decidedly no green building; electricity bills in summer are so high — about \$10,000 a month — that the Fellowship is thinking about buying a fuel cell to generate its own power.

Even if he were here today, and had absorbed a bit of the 21st century’s conservation consciousness, Wright would be uninterested in these complaints. Taliesin West was a demonstration of an ethic that remains as radical today as it was in 1938. A building, Wright was showing us, shouldn’t be a refuge from nature. It should be a means to enhance human interaction with nature. Quality of life isn’t a function of comfort, it’s about richness of experience.

Here’s an example: The drafting studio’s roof is translucent. Originally canvas, today’s acrylic panels admit a similar quality

site with consummate respect and grace. Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, designed by FHMB of San Francisco in the early 1980s, echoes the craggy character of the mountain behind it, much as Wright might have done it. But these are isolated examples. Wright’s admirers and disciples believe Taliesin West could, and should, exert more influence.

Swaback, now an architect in private practice in Scottsdale, orchestrates Taliesin West’s transformation from a kind of living museum to a center for inspiration and study centered on Wright’s ideas. During his two decades with the Fellowship, he alternated between the original Taliesin in Wisconsin and the winter camp in Scottsdale. The experience left him with the “unquenchable desire” to look for ways to integrate life, work, architecture and nature, he says. And considering the world’s increas-



SHAPE SHIFTER Wright advocated “the destruction of the box,” achieved by moving structural support in from the corners, thereby allowing corners to visually disappear. He even folded rigid chair frames to create “origami” seats (above), as seen at Taliesin West.



RESCUED ELF Wright salvaged and replicated concrete versions of sprites from Chicago’s Midway Gardens, a lavish dance hall and entertainment center he designed, which, doomed by Prohibition, was destroyed in 1929.



ROCK OF AGES Wright incorporated the area’s petroglyph-adorned boulders into his design. One glyph, two interlocking swirls, was deemed a sign of friendship and became the symbol of Taliesin West.



CULTURE VULTURE Music, fine dining and dance comprised 50 percent of Wright’s apprentices’ studies. Every week, he threw a formal dress dinner in the Garden Room (above) or other spaces on the property, hosting the likes of Georgia O’Keeffe.



ARCHITECTURE Taliesin West faces southwest to capture the sunset, which sets aglow the local amber rock and rose-painted redwood. Wright chose the color to echo the hue of light on the desert floor.

brush against the tents in the night, and mountain lions would slip into camp to drink water. “One dry summer during the war, when our buildings were still quite open, a starved cow wandered into the open-air kitchen and ate the ration books lying on the counter,” Brierly said. “The story made the newspapers as the best excuse offered to the Ration Board for the loss of a ration book.”

Wright never conceived of Taliesin West as a luxurious winter retreat. It was a camp, intended to provide modest shelter from the elements while remaining quite open to landscape and sky. There were no glass windows until 1945 — the living quarters had canvas flaps, and the great drafting studio was essentially a pavilion, open to the sun, bugs and dust. It was also an experimental laboratory for his ideas about architecture and the desert. He ordered changes incessantly.

“You could almost hear his brain whirring,” recalls Arnold Roy, who joined the fellowship in 1952. “He’d say, ‘Boys, let’s do this!’ And the concrete would fly.”

The compound’s design grew out of its site, literally and metaphorically. As perhaps befits a camp, there was no foundation — the buildings rest on the natural caliche just beneath the desert sand. (Caliche, a natural deposit of calcium carbonate

But this wasn’t an empty boast. Taliesin West is perhaps more intimately connected to its landscape and environment than any building on Earth.

It doesn’t only adopt texture and color from its surroundings. Its wedgelike forms abstract the mountains around it. The horizontal grooves in its walls evoke the erosion lines in desert canyons, and also create interplay of sun and shadow. The fin-like trusses elbowed over the drafting studio give the entire compound a defensive posture, like the body armor of a horned lizard, and yet on a winter evening when pink streaks rake the sky overhead, the armor melts into the heavens. This precisely reflects Wright’s vision of the desert as a duality of intense hostility, where “everything is ready to fight everything else,” and ineffable beauty, “all beyond reach of the finite mind.”

Of course the compound was, and is, dysfunctional. The roofs leaked in the 1930s — after many modifications they leak today. (The rain gutters in the Wrights’ living room run inside, under the ceiling.) The big redwood crossbeams of the pergola, a dramatic walkway between the drafting studio and garden court, were originally only 6 feet high — taller people were continually ducking and bumping. (After Wright’s death, the “boys” raised

of light. When a cloud lazies across the sun, the mood of the room suddenly changes, like one of those startling major-to-parallel-minor key shifts in a Schubert sonata. Most architects, then or now, would say that light in any workroom should be controlled and consistent. But spend an afternoon in Wright’s studio, and you begin to think differently: Maybe work should be affected by emotion and a connection to the cadences of nature. We are not, after all, machines.

Until his death in 1959, Wright talked and wrote incessantly about “organic architecture,” but his words and sentences could seem maddeningly slippery. Taliesin West, however, stands as an example of precisely what he meant. It’s the complete integration of architecture, nature and human life — so complete, in fact, that it’s not a matter of architectural style at all. It’s an entire philosophical system, a Utopia both aesthetic and social.

This is why Taliesin West, despite its universally admired beauty, has had little influence on the way we’ve built Arizona over the last 70 years. A few architects and builders have learned from the way it physically relates to its landscape. Tucson architect Les Wallach’s Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Superior doesn’t look anything like a Wright building, but it folds into its

ing population and dwindling energy supplies, Swaback adds, “The notion of embracing the fact that you’re going to be affected by weather is something that’s ahead of us somewhere.”

Arnold Roy, who still lives in one of the apartments at Taliesin West and conducts his own architectural practice in Wright’s drafting studio, says his life has been immeasurably enriched by living in an environment “where there’s beauty everywhere you look.” And something deeper. “It’s been an opportunity to reflect and think about how things might be in the world if people had the courage, as Mr. Wright did, to act on their ideas.”

■ *Taliesin West is open daily except holidays for docent-guided tours; costs range from \$10 to \$35. For more information, visit franklloydwright.org or call 480-860-2700, ext. 494.*

Lawrence W. Cheek, a longtime contributor to Arizona Highways, is the architecture critic for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. His 2006 book, Frank Lloyd Wright in Arizona, was published by Rio Nuevo Publishers.

After living in Oak Park, Illinois, home of the world’s largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings and houses, photographer David H. Smith enjoys every opportunity that comes his way to walk the hallowed grounds of Taliesin West.



Beaver Creek Country

It's in the middle of nowhere, which is a good thing, and so is the diversity you'll experience along this beautiful back road in Central Arizona.

THE MORE ONE-LANE bridges you encounter in the backcountry, the more fun you'll have. I've developed this theory over years of dirt-road travel, and it's foolproof. A one-lane bridge means you're in the middle of nowhere — the best place to be. It also means water and stories of days gone by.

Beaver Creek country northeast of Camp Verde offers all three, along with great hiking, visits to ancient Indian sites, a historic dude

ranch and a picturesque country boarding school. Best of all, you can make these side trips without logging any extra miles, and you can do the entire road trip in a passenger vehicle.

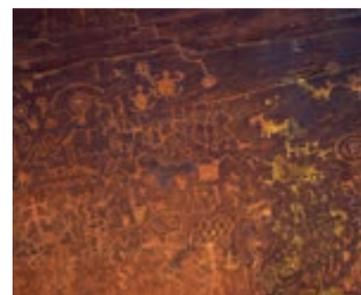
To begin, drive 6 miles north of Camp Verde on Interstate 17 to the McGuireville exit and turn right onto Beaver Creek Road. This paved road winds through rural Rimrock, where horses populate front yards and haystacks compete

for space with SUVs.

After 4.2 miles, turn right into the Montezuma Well section of Montezuma Castle National Monument. While not as dramatic as the castle itself, which sits a few miles south, this site is worth a look for its mystery and beauty.

Getting there requires a short uphill hike on a paved trail that offers dramatic views of the surrounding country. The well itself is dramatic, too — a 368-foot-wide natural limestone sink

BACKCOUNTRY BEND Sycamore, ash and cottonwood trees form a double arch framing a one-lane bridge (above) on Forest Service Road 618A near Beaver Creek Campground. The V-Bar-V Heritage Site (below) contains more than 1,330 exposed petroglyphs and more underground.



with cliff dwellings built into its side.

Ancient Indians, known as the Southern Sinagua, formed a thriving community here, beginning about A.D. 900. The well provided them

something precious in the upper Sonoran Desert — an endless supply of water that still flows through the sink at a rate of more than 1.5 million gallons a day.

Its source? Scientists have no idea, but the sound you hear is most definitely Mother Nature chuckling as she keeps her glories beyond us.

While you're there, be sure to hike the hill's back side down to Wet Beaver Creek. It's a short walk to a wonderful spot, shaded by sycamore and ash trees, and hidden beneath hanging boulders — the water spills off with all of gravity's force from the sink down into the creek.

After leaving Montezuma Well, turn right onto Forest Service Road 119 and drive less than 3 miles to its intersection with Forest Service Road 618A. Turn right and follow the paved road past three popular hiking trails — Bell, White Mesa and Apache Maid — and Beaver Creek Campground. After 2.5 miles — crossing three one-lane bridges — FR 618A ends at a modified T-intersection with Forest Service Road 618.

From there, turn left toward Southwestern Academy, which is the last thing you'd expect to see in the middle of the Coconino National Forest. But there it is, a private high school of 27 buildings on 180 acres homesteaded under a grant from Theodore Roosevelt. In the 1920s, it became a swank hunting getaway for Andrew Mellon, the Pennsylvania industrialist who made one of America's great fortunes in banking, iron and steel. In the early 1960s, it became a school.

Because it's private property, the staff asks that those interested in visiting call at least a day in advance to arrange a tour. The beauty of the campus makes it a



worthwhile diversion.

The school sits in a canyon called the Valley of the Sun, its western border shaded by high cliffs dotted with ancient hunting caves. Beaver Creek, one of Arizona's last remaining perennial streams, trickles through the canyon. Stone from its banks was used to construct the school's rustic, lodge-style buildings, some with timbered ceilings and chandeliers, and magnificent stone fireplaces.

The 1.3-mile-long road from the intersection to the school has two pullouts. I stopped at one and hiked down to Beaver Creek. The water flowed hard over the rocks, but not hard enough to cover them all.

Back at the start of FR 618, follow the signs to the V-Bar-V Heritage Site. Accessible after a half-mile hike, it consists of a sheltered rock

MONTEZUMA MYSTERY Water flows through Montezuma Well (right) at a rate of more than 1.5 million gallons a day. Scientists are unsure of the water's source.

wall containing more than 1,330 individual petroglyphs — etchings depicting everything from snakes and bear paws to walking, humanlike figures with backpacks. Archaeologists consider it among Arizona's best rock-art sites, and some believe it served as a solar calendar for the Southern

GO WITH THE FLOW Near Montezuma Well, water from Wet Beaver Creek (above) cuts grooves through red sandstone boulders.

Sinagua who made it.

I met Ken Zoll there. A Forest Service volunteer, he's been testing the calendar theory by taking photographs on the 21st of every month to





WILDERNESS WONDER Hiking trails from the Bull Pen Campground lead to the western edge of West Clear Creek Wilderness (left) in the Coconino National Forest.

record how the sun and the shadow lines frame the wall's images. Researchers believe these images marked time by telling the ancients when to plant, for example, or when to conduct a religious ceremony.

Zoll, a Chicago retiree, delights in informing visitors about this evocative place. "When you explain all this to people, you can see their appreciation level rise for those who created it," he says. "These were sophisticated, intelligent people."

Back on the road, follow

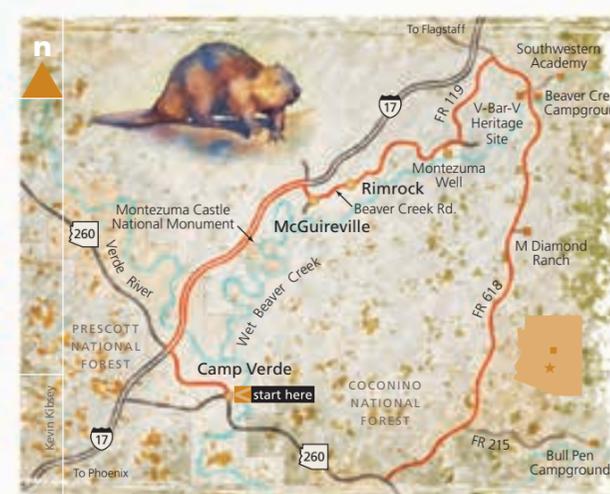
618 south 4 miles to M Diamond Ranch, a working cattle operation that also offers trail rides, cattle drives and rodeos. Most guests come from Sedona, less than an hour away, and owner Peggy Ingham says that brings some genuine dudes, many unable to tell a horse from a load of wood. Her cowboys work hard to give them an experience that's as authentic as possible, without making it dangerous.

More than a hundred years old, the M Diamond still looks down-in-the-dirt genuine. Its headquarters, an old stone home, stand on a scrub hill above the horse corrals that greet customers at the driveway's end.

➤ route finder

Note: Mileages are approximate.

- **Traveling north on Interstate 17** from Camp Verde, take the McGuireville exit (Exit 293) toward Montezuma Castle National Monument on East Beaver Creek Road.
- **Drive 4.2 miles on East Beaver Creek Road** through the towns of McGuireville and Rimrock to the entrance of Montezuma Well. At this point the pavement ends, and the road becomes Forest Service Road 119.
- **Drive 3 miles to the intersection** with Forest Service Road 618. Turn right onto FR 618 (paved road) and go past the parking area for three hiking trails — the White Mesa, Bell and Apache Maid trails — to the entrance of the V-Bar-V Heritage Site, which is 1.9 miles.
- **There is a modified T-intersection** at this point with a small desert island in the middle. Turn right to go into the V-Bar-V Heritage Site. To visit the Southwestern Academy, turn left and travel 1.3 miles to the campus.
- **From the campus, backtrack** and return the same way. From the V-Bar-V intersection, travel south on FR 618 for 3.8 miles to the entrance of the M Diamond Ranch.
- **From that entrance, continue** south for another 7.2 miles to State Route 260 and Camp Verde.



TWILIGHT HIGHLIGHT Sunset highlights prickly pear cactuses loaded with fruit at the base of Sacred Mountain (above), which is said to glow as daylight turns to twilight.

Ingham and her husband bought the place in 1999, and she pauses before describing the adjustment from Scottsdale. "Let me put it this way," she says. "If you like manicures, you won't like it here. But we wanted our grandkids to know things other than suburbia, such as where their food comes from, and the importance of open spaces."

From the M Diamond, drive 7.2 miles south on 618 to its intersection with State Route 260, 5 miles southeast

of Camp Verde. This pretty stretch of corduroy road offers long views of flat-topped mesas and dark hills that bulge to the sky under dazzling afternoon light.

The adventurous might try a side trip on Forest Service Road 215 into West Clear Creek Canyon. Rougher and rockier than 618, this road plunges into a deep defile sheltered by tall mountains and soaring cliffs. The creek runs between these giants, decorating its bank-side trees with the best of fall's reds, oranges and yellows. The Bull Pen Campground sits at the bottom, 3.1 miles down the road, where some fine hiking trails begin.

Including side jaunts, I drove about 32 miles on this trip, and crossed at least seven one-lane bridges. It reminded me of the late Arizona writer Sister Eulalia Bourne, who taught school in this captivating country. She wrote, "If you're looking for a good time, or it's health you seek, or peace and sweet contentment, just come to Beaver Creek." ■■■

➤ travel tips

Vehicle Requirements: High-clearance.

Warning: Back-road travel can be hazardous, so beware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone know where you're going and when you plan to return.

Information: Coconino National Forest, 928-282-4119 or fs.fed.us/r3/coconino; Montezuma Castle National Monument and Montezuma Well, 928-567-3322 or nps.gov/archive/moca; Southwestern Academy, 928-567-4581 or southwesternacademy.edu; M Diamond Ranch, 928-592-0148 or mdiamondranch.com. The V-Bar-V Heritage Site is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Friday through Monday; admission is \$5. Travelers in Arizona can dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more. az511.gov.

Honey Bee Canyon

Birds, bees and spectacular views of the Santa Catalinas are among the highlights of this urban hike near Tucson.



SCREECH. The haunting sound, like steam escaping from a pipe, echoed off the pewter-colored canyon walls. I'm no expert on birdcalls, but I could have sworn it was the call of a great horned owl. I looked toward the sound, but the early morning sun created dark shadows in the rocks and I couldn't see the source.

Screech.

This time, the bird's call came from behind me. Either there were two owls, or the narrow canyon was playing acoustic tricks on me. Ten minutes went by, but the crafty owl had gone silent. I put my camera away.

I'd started out on the Honey Bee Trail hoping to capture the nighttime predator — digitally, with 6 million pixels — but he'd beaten me again. Always one to root for the underdog, I silently congratulated the elusive owl.

My easy 3-mile round-trip hike from the town of Oro Valley's Honey Bee Canyon Park began with a gradual descent into the shallow Honey Bee Canyon, thick with creosote, mesquite and paloverde trees. From there, the trail veers left, passing the park's immaculate picnic tables, grills and restrooms, then heads off toward the second ramada.

Bright emerald-hued hummingbirds accompanied me along the short walk to

the sandy wash. The sight of a 15-foot dam, from where I'd heard the owl's call, took me by surprise, because parts of the 5-mile-long arroyo appear dry at times. The dam was built by early ranchers to help support cattle grazing along the riparian area that wends southward from the Tortolita Mountains.

Giving up on the owl or owls, I climbed through the dam's diminutive doorway — a portal into a different realm — to find the previously flat wash had transformed into a narrow canyon. I imagined a summer monsoon sending torrents of water into the canyon and looked up at the deep blue sky to assure myself that rain clouds weren't threatening a downpour. My apprehension faded after a few hundred feet when the wash opened up again, allowing a spectacular view of the rugged Santa Catalina Mountains to the east.

Unwilling to go home completely empty handed, I snapped a few shots of a majestic saguaro guarding the canyon's entrance. I retraced my steps through the dam, but instead of using the trail, I walked along the wash, inadvertently carrying with me several of the largest devil's claw seedpods I'd ever seen.

The wash winds northward, passing under Honey Bee Canyon bridge and beneath brown hills dotted with tall saguaros — their arms

gesturing a friendly greeting to all who pass. Three-quarters of a mile from the bridge, I stepped over the toppled remains of another dam and came to a large bronze-colored boulder covered with faded petroglyphs.

I sat on a natural stone bench to study the primitive symbols, the work of villagers who occupied the area for eight centuries beginning in A.D. 450. The rock evoked a spiritual feeling in me as I envisioned ancient Hohokam artists carving their unique perspectives into its hard surface.

Intrepid hikers often continue up the wash past a third dam, but I decided to retrace my steps to the parking area. The sight of

HONEY OF A HIKE Hohokam petroglyphs (above) decorate a boulder along the Honey Bee Canyon trail. The Santa Catalina Mountains (right) provide a majestic backdrop for a group of stately saguaros towering above the wash in Honey Bee Canyon.

others strolling by, combined with the occasional glimpse of the new homes lining the wash, reminded me that this is a popular urban hike and an important riparian habitat — one that could become compromised if not treated with respect.

When I got back to my car, I took a moment to reflect. Although I didn't see an owl on this trip, I realized that the exceptional desert beauty of Honey Bee Canyon is reason enough to keep me going back. **AH**

▶ trail guide

Length: 2 to 3 miles round-trip.

Elevation Gain: Less than 100 feet.

Difficulty: Easy.

Payoff: Wildlife sightings, views, desert scenery.

Location: Oro Valley, 15 miles north of downtown Tucson.

Getting There: From Tucson, drive north on Oracle Road about 7 miles north of Ina Road. Turn left onto Rancho Vistoso Boulevard; drive 3 miles to park.

Additional Information: Oro Valley Parks & Recreation Department, 520-229-5050.



