

Cowboy Chef
Robert McGrath

Prescott's
Whiskey Row

A Quiet Hike
to Paradise

Why Al McCoy
Doesn't Hike

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

APRIL 2008

BEST RESTAURANTS 25 IN ARIZONA OF OUR FAVORITE PLACES TO GRAB A BITE TO EAT



PLUS:

- Tucson's Abandoned Cemeteries
- What's Up With This Cover? [See page 9]

Features

14 Forks on the Road

When you're at the Canyon, you eat at El Tovar. Everybody knows that. But where do you go when you're in Page or Payson or Patagonia? It's not always obvious, so we've put together a list of 25 of the state's best places to grab a bite. There are plenty of others, but this should fill you up for a while.

BY KELLY KRAMER

24 Twisting Their Arms

You wouldn't know it by looking at them, but Joshua trees are in the lily family. Really. We're not making that up. Despite their lack of any family resemblance, these crooked monocots are well worth the drive to Western Arizona.

A PORTFOLIO BY NEIL WEIDNER

32 Left Behind

When a Tucson man discovered a sinkhole in his front yard, he was curious. When he started digging around and found bones, he was speechless, and more than a little concerned. Turns out, his 90-year-old bungalow was built on an old cemetery, and even though the headstones were moved, as many as 6,000 bodies were left behind.

BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWARD MCCAIN

38 Artwork in Progress

Three decades ago, Leda and Michael Kahn began work on Eliphante, their evolving monument to the world of art. It's an unusual compound, to say the least, but for the two artists, it was a dream come true.

BY KATHY MONTGOMERY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DON B. & RYAN B. STEVENSON

Departments

2 EDITOR'S LETTER

3 CONTRIBUTORS

4 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

5 THE JOURNAL

People, places and things from around the state, including cowboy chef Robert McGrath, Suns announcer Al McCoy, and the historic fire that wiped out Whiskey Row in Prescott.

44 BACK ROAD ADVENTURE

Stronghold Canyon: The Dragoon Mountains of South-eastern Arizona are bizarre and beautiful. See for yourself — the views from the dirt roads are out of this world.

48 HIKE OF THE MONTH

South Canyon: If you want to escape the 5 million people on the South Rim, this small corner of the Canyon offers some incredible scenery.

online arizonahighways.com

In Arizona, it adorns everything from T-shirts to freeways — the flute-playing figure known as kokopelli. This month at arizonahighways.com, our writer explores the myth and magic surrounding this iconic symbol of the Southwest. You'll also find loads of things to see and do with our online trip planner.

WEEKEND GETAWAY Arizona's Colonal William Boyce Thompson's legacy includes more than his botanical garden. Visit this silver miner's historic home, Picketpost Mansion, in Superior.

DISCOVER ARIZONA Find out what's happening this month with our online 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.

IMAGINATION STATION Boulder-strewn hills earmark Council Rocks in Southeastern Arizona's Dragoon Mountains, where Cochise brokered a tenuous peace for his people. Photograph by Edward McCain

FRONT COVER In *Arizona Highways'* first major use of digital photographic illustration as cover art, Dot's Diner is plucked out of Bisbee's Shady Dell trailer park and dropped onto the Willcox Playa, 70 miles north. For more information, see page 9. Photographic illustration by Edward McCain

BACK COVER A setting moon casts an orchid-colored hue on Joshua trees near Lake Mead in Northwestern Arizona. Photograph by Neil Weidner

To order a print of this photograph, see information above.





JEFF KIDA

Although saguaros are the main attraction in the Arizona desert, Joshua trees are something special, too. On page 24, we tell you where to find them.



NEL WEIDNER

THE "CORN SQUEEZINGS" are long gone. In the days of Prohibition, though, a barrel of the local moonshine could always be found at Jake Renfro's cabin in Pinetop. Whether you needed to thaw out or get comfortably numb, that's where you went. The cabin is still the place to go, but the menu has changed. After Prohibition, Jake went legit and opened Jake Renfro's Famous Log

Cabin Café. That's when the corn squeezings disappeared. In 1938, he sold the place to Charlie Clark, who opened a steakhouse that remains a must on any road trip to the White Mountains. Snowboarders in the winter, hikers in the summer, fishermen, birdwatchers, moms and dads with rugrats in the backseat ... everybody, at one time or another, finds his way to Charlie Clark's.

And why not? The steaks are hot, the beer is cold and the atmosphere is exactly what you'd hope to find in this neck of the woods — the stone fireplace, log walls and knotty-pine patio will make you think of the Ponderosa, with pool tables and Amstel Light mixed in. There's no "Hoss Ate Here" plaque, but you'll channel his spirit, especially when you bite into one of Charlie's bacon-wrapped filets.

In this month's cover story, we'll tell you how to get to Charlie Clark's, along with 24 other restaurants around the state. If you're a longtime reader of *Arizona Highways*, you know this subject is new territory for us. As a travel magazine, though, it makes sense. Think about it. When you're at the Canyon, you eat at El Tovar. Everybody knows that. But where do you go when you're touring the rest of the state? It's not always obvious, but you have to eat, and that's where our roundup comes in. The 25 restaurants on our list are among the state's best, for various reasons.

As Kelly Kramer writes in *Forks on the Road*, "When measuring the quality of a restaurant, there are three key elements to consider: food, service and ambience. The best restaurants get high marks on all three." Of course, not every place on our list hits the trifecta, but several of them do, including the Velvet Elvis in Patagonia (great pizza, but no peanut butter and bacon sandwiches), Mattina's (yes, you can get butter-drenched escargots in Kingman) and Feast, which has been a favorite in

Tucson for a long time. When you're in the Old Pueblo, drop by. The food is spectacular, the atmosphere is casual, and there aren't any poltergeists, which isn't always the case in Tucson. Just ask Moses Thompson.

You don't know Moses, but if you did, you'd sympathize. Turns out, the Craftsman bungalow he bought in a historic neighborhood in Tucson was built above an abandoned cemetery — the coffins were exposed when a sinkhole showed up in his front yard.

"There was a split in the earth and I feared a broken pipe," Moses recalls. "I dug down until I hit a board. I reached in and found three diamond-shaped copper ornaments, and then I pulled out finger bones." Creepy.

Although the headstones in the Old Court Street Cemetery were relocated in the early 1900s to make way for new homes, as many as 6,000 bodies are still buried there. It's bizarre, to say the least, but it's not the first abandoned cemetery in Tucson. It's the third. The first was within the walls of the original Presidio, and the second, the National Cemetery downtown, still holds 1,300 bodies, which will be moved to make room for the new Pima County Courthouse.

In *Left Behind*, Jana Bommersbach shares the details of this intriguing story. A few pages later, in *Artwork in Progress*, Kathy Montgomery shares another story of intrigue. Hers, however, won't give you the willies. In fact, it's more of a love story, about two artists who lived a dream life in Cornville, on the banks of Oak Creek.

The story began about 30 years ago, when Leda and Michael Kahn started work on Eliphante, their evolving monument to the world of art. Sadly, Michael passed away recently, but Leda plans to keep their home open to anyone with an appreciation for their art, which is anything but mainstream. As Kathy writes: "Gifts of stained glass and fabric became windows and wall coverings. Chipped pottery, beads and tapestries encrust the walls like jewels. The Kahns even embedded the truck they rode in on."

There are paintings and sculptures, too. And other oddities. As you'll see, there's a little bit of everything at Eliphante, except maybe corn squeezings. Still, Eliphante is a must on any road trip to Central Arizona. It's the Charlie Clark's of Cornville.

— Robert Stieve

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highways on tv

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CONTRIBUTORS



JANA BOMMERSBACH

Jana Bommersbach is no stranger to investigative reporting. She ripped the lid off an open-and-shut murder case in her book *The Trunk*

Murderess: Winnie Ruth Judd, and probed the 2004 slaying of Tempe resident Loretta Bowersock for her new book, to be released this fall. When she was assigned a story about a cemetery that was unearthed below a Tucson home (see *Left Behind*, page 32), she thought it would be a straightforward interview job. "That's when I discovered the pattern," she says. "This is the third time homes have been built on cemeteries in Tucson, and I'm not sure anyone has ever come to grips with the harsh reality of this." It took a month of reporting to dig up the details of this unusual story. Bommersbach, a North Dakota native, says she dreaded moving to "a big chunk of desert" when she landed a job with *The Arizona Republic* in 1972. The rattlesnake on the cover of her state map didn't help matters. But, she's fallen in love with Arizona, and along the way, she's won multiple national awards for her writing.



LEO W. BANKS

"If there's a better way to pay the light bill than poking around Arizona's backcountry, I'm unaware of it," says Leo W. Banks,

with his characteristic sense of humor. For this month's *Back Road Adventure*, he traveled with photographer and fellow Tucsonan Edward McCain through the Dragoon Mountains (see page 44). As a side trip, the two drove along Middlemarch Road to Middlemarch Pass in the southeast corner of the Dragoons. They hiked up to a promontory that Banks considers one of the 10 best views in Arizona — it overlooks Sulphur Springs Valley and the Chiricahuas. The only problem: "The wind was so strong it nearly sent us on an unexpected parasailing journey," Banks says. He and McCain have collaborated on many of Banks' whopping 320 stories for *Arizona Highways*. Banks has written or contributed to nine books for *Arizona Highways*. His work has also appeared in *National Geographic Traveler*, *Sports Illustrated* and the *Wall Street Journal*.



EDWARD MCCAIN

As a "problem child" in the fourth grade, Edward McCain tried to imagine what it would be like to be in another person's

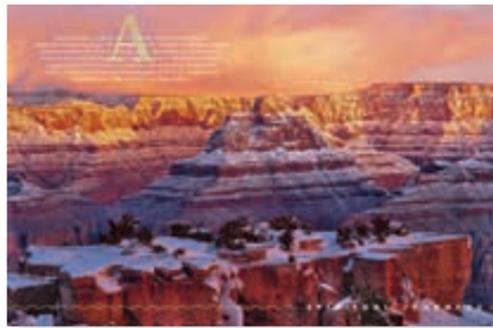
head. He loved visual arts because they "allow one to see through the eyes of another person, if only for a split second." That empathy shines through in his photographs for *Left Behind* (see page 32), which details the discovery of thousands of unmarked graves under a Tucson housing development. "The greatest challenge was the somber nature of the story, and how to capture that," McCain says. "I was completely unsure what I would do until I spent time talking with the subjects." McCain was struck by the homeowners' and archaeologist's efforts to honor the dead, and he imbued his portraits of them with that sensitivity. In addition to *Arizona Highways*, McCain's work has appeared in *National Geographic Traveler*, *National Geographic Adventure* and *Sports Illustrated*. He was nominated for the Arizona Arts Award for his photography of Mission San Xavier del Bac, which he wants to make into a book.



DON & RYAN STEVENSON

When father-and-son team Don and Ryan Stevenson photographed the outdoor art at Eliphante (see *Artwork in*

Progress, page 38), which is nestled among the cottonwoods along Oak Creek, they got closer to nature than they'd bargained for. "While setting up our photo equipment in an underground tunnel in one of the art exhibits, a bat decided to lay claim to the underside of our tripod," Ryan says. "Dad thought it was best that I finish the photograph while he shouted directions." The genetic link between these two is obvious both in talent and appearance, as evidenced by the digitally manipulated photograph above that joins half of Ryan's face with half of Don's. As an *Arizona Highways* contributor for 23 years, Don recently paired with Ryan to shoot more than a half-dozen stories for the magazine. Their work has also appeared in corporate publications, as well as *National Geographic* and *The New York Times*.



Doggone Photograph

Once again your publication has shown not only the wonders of Arizona, but also the fantastic abilities of those who take the great photographs that appear in *Arizona Highways*. I wonder how many people will view the “Spiritual Journeys” photo on pages 8 and 9 of the December 2007 issue and see the “puppy” that appears near the bottom center of the two-page photo. The big eyes and long, floppy ears just jumped right out at me when I turned to that page. If photographer Randy Prentice had been there a week earlier or a week later, this unusual view might not have been there.

Fletcher Johnson, Vancouver, Washington

You Name It

Since reading *The High Life* in your January 2008 issue, I’ve been trying to find out how the name White Mountains came about. I’ve asked the chambers of commerce in Show Low and Overgaard, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, several librarians, and they all guess, or say they will get back to me. Any chance you have the skinny?

Carole Rock, Queen Creek

EDITOR’S NOTE: According to Will C. Barnes’ book *Arizona Place Names, the White Mountains were called the “Mogollon” mountains on a 1701 Kino map and an 1852 Sitgreaves map. A Hartley map from 1865 called them “Sierra Blanco” (sic), misspelling the Spanish word for white. In an 1871 message, Arizona’s then-governor called them the White Mountains. Father Kino also noted the Sierra Azul on his map, probably after the Blue River. Possibly a Spanish Franciscan priest or missionary called them Sierra Blanca, but the real origin is lost, as far as Barnes knows.*

Ghosts & Castles

What a wonderful surprise when I opened my October 2007 issue of *Arizona Highways*. Not that every issue isn’t a treasure, but some hold special meanings and treats. First, there were the intriguing tales of the hotel ghosts. And then there was “my” Copper Queen Hotel. I was born in Bisbee, and I have the most wonderful memories of the beautiful Queen. I still return at every opportunity to have a beer at the bar, reminisce in the restaurant, watch the

sunset from the balcony, and wander the halls (like a ghost?). Next time I’ll pay more attention to the presence of Julia and the other departed guests. Then, as I turned the pages, I happened upon “my” Mystery Castle. My family moved from Bisbee in 1944, my sixth year. And where did we go? South Phoenix, to a 7-acre ranchette on Desert Lane. We lived on that glorious desert for 10 years. And during those years, I walked every inch of land, climbed every trail on South Mountain, and spent endless hours perched quietly out of sight watching the activity surrounding this awesome “Castle.” I saw the ladies (Fran and Mary Lou) working endlessly on the property. I didn’t know the story of the Castle (at that time), and kept trying to gain the courage to approach them. But my youth and good manners kept me at bay. It wasn’t until many years later (about 1995), on a vacation to Phoenix, that I finally got my wish and visited the Castle of my youth. Ms. Gulley was a wonderful hostess, filled with incredible stories and facts. I’m so grateful for the opportunity of meeting her. True, South Phoenix is no longer the wide-open space of my youth, but as long as the magnificent structure stands, I can still “go home.” Thanks for the memories!

Joan Cunningham, Oro Valley

For the Birds

Dull? You called her dull [*Arizona Cardinals*, December 2007]? Anyone depicting the female half of any species as dull either flirts with death on a regular basis

or has numerous incarnations yet to endure. The female half of Ohio’s state bird is distinctive with her identical orange beak against her “muted, more reserved” colors. You might even call her “more sophisticated,” but never dull.

Steve Haber, Cincinnati

The Marilyn Hawkes article on the Arizona cardinal [December 2007] brought to mind an Easter spent at Gilbert Ray Park in our RV. We awakened Easter morning to an unbelievable sight — snow had gently fallen in the night, and out our window in a snowy paloverde sat the most beautiful, startling red cardinal.

Gail & Donna Andress, Nelson, Nevada

Brushes With Greatness

Thank you for your wonderful magazine. My fourth-grade class used your beautiful photographs of Arizona for an art project that got rave reviews. My husband’s cousin, John, had passed



along your magazines a few years ago, and I kept them until I could think of a project. I pasted a photo in the middle of a 12-by-18-inch drawing paper, and my students finished the photos. They were featured at our open house last year, and everyone was impressed.

Denise Gumaer, Hidden Trails Elementary, Chino Hills, California

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 by mail at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85009. For more information, visit arizonahighways.com.



FAR OUT!

Monument Valley’s remote and stately slickrock gets a visit from a whimsical 1967 camper. It belongs to a member of Sisters on the Fly, a 630-strong club of fly-fishing, river-running adventuresses who haul vintage trailers around the country in a “Cowgirl Caravan.”
 ■ For information about the caravan, visit sistersonthefly.com. For information about traveling to Monument Valley, call 435-727-5870.

GEOFF GOURLEY



BRENDAN MOORE

PEOPLE

Cowboy Chef

He's not an Arizona native, but you'd never know it by tasting one of Robert McGrath's Southwest-inspired creations.

ROBERT MCGRATH ISN'T your ordinary cowboy. Sure, he has the boots and the Stetson and the friendly, untailored attitude; but he also has what it takes to venture beyond the standard franks-and-beans cowboy fare.

A five-time James Beard nominee (and one-time winner), McGrath started making his mark on Phoenix's culinary scene in 1992, when he moved to the Valley to serve as chef de cuisine at Windows on the Green at the Phoenician Resort. Later, he forged a decidedly Southwestern menu at the acclaimed Roaring Fork, where he harnessed Arizona's finest flavors.

"There's a simple and sensible approach to the lifestyle out here, and that carries over to the food and the restaurants," McGrath says. "That characteristic, tempered with the progress of our ongoing evolution, is the bridge. Arizona has a wealth of ingredients due to the

diversity of the microclimates throughout the state. There are so many different ways to exercise so many ingredients."

Although McGrath sold his interest in Roaring Fork last year, he is, by no means, out of the business. Shortly after the death of his friend, Chris Pischke, McGrath scooped up Pischke's Paradise in Scottsdale, revamped the menu, and returned much of the glory to one of the Valley's most storied restaurants.

"The sentiment was to keep some of the businesses [in Scottsdale] alive and running and not let everything be assimilated into the chain program — keep local businesses run by locals," he says. "This building has housed two of Scottsdale's true land-

marks, Pischke's Paradise and Mag's Ham Bun. Hopefully, we can continue to keep Scottsdale in the hands of Scottsdale."

What's more, McGrath added another new restaurant to his Scottsdale saddlebag, opening REM in Scottsdale, which he describes as a throwback to "old-school continental cuisine."

When he's not in the kitchen, the chef doesn't hesitate to take advantage of the state. "Horseback riding is one of my favorite pleasures, and spending time at our home in Pine-top is always relaxing," he says. "We enjoy Arizona in slow motion. We enjoy a little here, a little there, and make a stop over there."

And when it comes to his ideal Arizona road trip, McGrath's itinerary would be rooted in what he knows best — food. "I'd visit Tubac and eat at the Country Club. Then, I'd head south to Bisbee, spend the night at the Shady Dell, and enjoy breakfast at the Breakfast Club," he says. "Next, I'd be off to Springerville to take in the Chavez family's New Mexican cuisine at Los Dos Molinos — adovada ribs. The next stop would be Payson to enjoy some great Italian food at Chef Gerardo's Italian Bistro. And finally, I'd stop in Sedona to visit Café Elote for Jeff Smedstad's Mexican cuisine. Then, of course, I'd bring the road trip back to Pischke's Blue Ribbon in Old Town Scottsdale." — Kelly Kramer

CELEBRITY Q & A

Al McCoy

Announcer, Phoenix Suns

by Dave Pratt

AH: If you were trying to convince your colleagues in the Eastern Conference that Arizona is one of the most beautiful places in America, where would you take them?

AM: Without question, I'd start in Sedona. There's no place in the world quite like it.

AH: When you go hiking in Arizona, what's the one thing — other than water — that you always carry in your backpack?

AM: My idea of hiking is to take a brisk walk around the block. And since I don't own a backpack, I'd be in trouble. But if I did, probably a nice pillow would be in my backpack!

AH: If you were making a solo road trip to Sedona, which would you choose: Harley or Mustang convertible?

AM: No big decision here, I'd make the trip in a Ford Mustang with the top down, enjoying one of my favorite jazz CDs.

AH: Other than sitting courtside at a Suns game, what's your favorite place in Arizona?

AM: Well, of course, Sedona pops up again, but also the White Mountains. They're two very different places in so many ways, but both are so unique to our great state of Arizona.

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

AM: Having traveled all over the world with the Suns these past 36 years ... when Arizona comes up to folks that have never been here, it's that same old story: "My God, how do you live there in the horrible summer heat?" I just laugh to myself, and when I get home, I crank up the AC.

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



RESTAURANTS

On the Farm

Tired of fast food? The "slow food" at Quiescence in South Phoenix will make you want to eat for hours.

AS HE PRESENTS THE GRILLED SCALLOPS mingled with marinated red cabbage and citrus in an emerald pool of mint sauce, manager Dustin Christofolo proudly explains the origins of the ingredients. "The oranges are from a farm in Peoria, and the grapefruit is from that tree over there," he says, pointing to the front yard.

In an era of increasingly globalized cuisine, Quiescence in South Phoenix strives to use ingredients so close to home they're actually point-at-able. The menu is about 90 percent local, with much of it plucked from the surrounding 13-acre Farm at South Mountain.

Quiescence abides by the Slow Food philosophy, a movement formed in reaction to fast food. It means "simple food prepared well and sourced well," says chef Greg LaPrad. "Instead of looking for the most efficient way to do things, we look at more classic ways."

Thus, the bread is baked in a wood-fired oven, the pasta is completely handcrafted, and animals are purchased whole so that every part can be used. "It's really elemental and back to the roots," LaPrad says.

Slow food is eco-friendly, so the fish is flown in overnight from sustainable fisheries, and the produce is organic. Slow food is also slow: The relaxed staff spaces out the courses so diners can be in the moment, savoring good food, company and ambiance.

The result satisfies body and soul. The scallop dish is a jewel-colored trove of textures and flavors as subtly complementary as the nuances of wine. Warm focaccia, gilded with local olive oil, melts in your mouth. Ineffably spiced acorn squash from One Windmill Farms is swad-

dled in toothsome tortelli and anointed with a creamy sauce of pistachios from Queen Creek Olive Mill.

Ingredients from farther afield are so fresh they transport you to their source, not the other way around. The brothy, buttery seafood and fennel cream soup catapults you to the New England seashore, by way of nearby herb and dairy farms. Whole roasted redfish recalls brisk ocean fishing trips. Raw farmstead cheese conjures a vision of contented Holsteins in Wisconsin grazing on a green hillside.

LaPrad rewrites the menu daily based on what's freshest and seasonal, so what appears one day might disappear the next. All the more reason to be in the moment.

■ Quiescence is located at 6106 S. 32nd Street in Phoenix. For more information, call 602-276-0601 or visit quiescencerestaurant.com.

— Keridwen Cornelius



JEFF KIDA



EDWARD MCCAIN

LODGING

Hotel Congress

Cozy rooms, great bar, ghosts, gangsters ... there are plenty of reasons to spend a night in Tucson's classic old hotel.

WHEN IT OPENED ITS DOORS in 1919, Tucson's Hotel Congress was regaled for its grandeur and praised for its modern comforts. Its fame didn't extend far beyond Arizona, however. Located across the road from the Southern Pacific depot, it was just one of the many upscale lodgings in the West that rode the railroad boom into existence. Not until January 23, 1934, when a fire led to the capture of John Dillinger, did the hotel and the sleepy city it was in grab the nation's attention.

John Dillinger, America's "most wanted," never slept at the Congress, but two members of his gang, Charles Makely and Russell Clark, had registered there under false names. Forced to evacuate the burning building, the pair tried to return to their rooms to grab their valises, but were forbidden access. Distraught, Makely and Clark offered two firemen a reward to retrieve their bags. The firefighters complied, hauling down the gangsters' heavy luggage — later found to contain \$23,816 in cash and several Tommy guns.

In the process, the jittery out-of-towners aroused the suspicions of the firemen, who decided to do some sleuthing. Combing through photos in *True Detective* magazine, one of them recognized Clark. The hunt was on — and quickly over. Without firing a shot, the cops in the "hick town" of Tucson had accomplished what several state police forces and the FBI had failed to do: Put the cuffs on Dillinger.

In the hallway behind the Cup Café, today's visitors to the downtown landmark can view photos of the players in this cops-and-robbers drama.

But the Hotel Congress had far more going for it than the occasional gangster guest. In the 1930s and '40s, for example, its Tap Room was the favorite haunt of rodeo cowboy and artist Pete Martinez. His nationally renowned Western scenes — New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia was among his early celebrity collectors — still hang on the walls of this atmospheric watering hole. Contrary to rumor, however, Martinez didn't settle his booze tab with his art; he donated the pieces because he liked the bar and enjoyed his drinking partners. The hotel inspired generosity in later artists, too. In 1989, Larry Boyce arrived on a bicycle from San Francisco and volunteered to paint the lobby with the distinctive Southwest Deco designs that are still there today.

The Congress pays homage to its history in many ways. The rooms still boast many pieces of their original furniture, as well as vintage radios, windows that open and steam heat in winter. A handout available at the front desk — behind which you can glimpse the same switchboard used to alert guests to the 1934 fire — notes that four of the rooms also offer a different type of blast from the past: ghosts, several of whom are described in rather specific detail. Room 214, for example, often plays host to a "little man, nicely dressed in a seersucker suit." And the annual Dillinger Days in January celebrate the hotel's claim to fame with re-enactments of the capture.

Nevertheless, the Congress is far from living in the past. The Cup Café, a popular Tucson gathering spot, dishes up delicious contemporary fare. And Club Congress, dubbed one of the top 10 rock venues in the country, is a hub for hipsters of all ages. Today's outlaws might carry guitars, not guns, and the heat might be generated by dancing, not a conflagration, but the hotel still gets pretty fired up.

■ *Hotel Congress is located at 311 E. Congress Street in Tucson. For more information, call 520-798-1618 or visit hotelcongress.com.*

— Edie Jarolim

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Right Touch

Photoshop has become a household word. At this magazine, however, it's something we use sparingly. This month, we used it on the cover. Here's why.

BY NOW YOU'VE PROBABLY NOTICED the striking photograph on the cover of this issue, and you might be wondering why *Arizona Highways* has never featured this place before — a place with a quaint little diner standing like a neon mirage in the middle of nowhere.

The answer is simple. It doesn't exist. Oh, the diner's real. Dot's serves up some of the best home-style cooking you'll find. That's why it's featured on our list of the state's best restaurants. To highlight this iconic eatery, we lifted it from its earthly setting in Bisbee and set it down in front of a mythical backdrop. If the cover of this issue caught your attention, mission accomplished.

What we did is called photo illustration — digitally melding disparate elements into one believable fantasy. This isn't the first manipulated photo *Arizona Highways* has ever published, but it breaks new ground in our use of digital technology to create a cover from multiple photographs.

The idea of doing a photo illustration came about when we decided to feature one of the top restaurants on the magazine's cover. The challenge was finding a restaurant or diner that would be visually appealing. As you know, many of the best restaurants are known for their food and service, not necessarily the beauty of their architecture and surroundings.

Creative minds went to work on the project. The concept progressed rapidly during the thinking-out-loud phase as we



brainstormed ways to treat the cover. Once the base elements for a strong image were decided, execution and refinement got under way.

At that point, photographer and Photoshop wizard Edward McCain was brought into the loop. Edward, who is a long-time contributor to *Arizona Highways*, first photographed Dot's Diner in Bisbee, and then, on his computer, experimented by blending different backgrounds with the classic diner. As the cover evolved, several mockups were e-mailed back and forth between McCain's studio in Tucson and the magazine's office in Phoenix.

"For this photo illustration, I wanted the image to be somewhat believable," McCain says. "Even the sky, which is a Photoshop-generated gradient. When I'm working in Photoshop, I give an image certain visual rules and then work within those rules to create the strongest expression I can. Tools for this include composition, lighting, perspective, color, shape, form, content, and anything else I can bring to the image."

After 16 hours of computer time, McCain's final image was approved and put into production. From our perspective, it was time well spent — it's important that we stay on the cutting edge and explore the digital technology available in modern publishing. For us, however, it's the kind of thing we'll do only with a very specific purpose in mind.

"By removing the diner from its natural environment and placing it on a desert playa at sunset, I believe we created a very striking image that'll make people do a double take," McCain says. "I think that's part of the function of a successful cover image. As long as the image is clearly identified as a photo illustration, I don't have a problem with it. I do have a problem with photographers retouching images to 'improve' them without letting the reader know. One of the great assets of photography is that of believability. In my role as a photojournalist, I never want to lose that credibility."

It's the same for *Arizona Highways*. We don't want to lose your trust in the beautiful photography published in our magazines, calendars and books, so we'll never abuse the technology at our disposal. Our litmus test is very narrow and stringent when making the decision to modify an editorial photograph, and we'll always let you know if we do it.

— Peter Ensenberger, Director of Photography

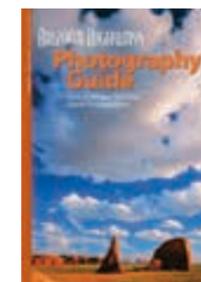


PHOTO TIP

Because of the mechanics of sensor design, digital images always look a little softer than they really are. Almost all digital photographs can be improved with some sharpening. When software sharpens an image, it looks for an edge and then bumps

up the contrast along that edge. So it doesn't have much effect on a clear blue sky, but dramatic effect on something with a lot of texture, like a brick wall. Over-sharpening can wreck a photograph. The resultant halos make edges look artificial and

magnify the noise. Sharpening can always be added to a photograph, but once applied, it can't be undone. So don't go crazy.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Look for *Arizona Highways Photography Guide*, available now at arizonahighways.com.

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

HISTORY

Whiskey Row Fire

On July 14, 1900, a devastating fire wiped out the Palace Bar in Prescott. The bar itself, however, was saved, thanks to some enterprising barflies.

BEFORE ARIZONA BECAME a state, most people east of the Mississippi thought the Territory was little more than a giant, raucous mining camp. Although it's true that many Arizona towns in those days revolved around the prospect of discovering gold or silver, mining wasn't the only moneymaker in the camps.

When those hard-working prospectors hit the mother lode, they'd head into town to spend their fortunes. And, of course, some early entrepreneurs knew exactly how to capitalize on the commercial opportunities. One such capitalist was Prescott saloon owner Robert Brow.

In the latter part of the 19th century, the 100 block of South Montezuma Street in Prescott became known as "Whiskey Row" because of the many saloons that lined the street. Miners, prospectors, ranchers and loggers quenched their thirst at those watering holes, but one saloon offered more than

hard whiskey. Known as one of the finest establishments on the Row, the Palace Bar, owned by Brow, was a gathering spot where men not only drank, but ate meals, looked for work, voted, and bought and sold mining claims.

The Palace hosted some of the Territory's toughest customers, including Doc Holliday, Wyatt and Virgil Earp, and other famous (and infamous) gamblers.

On the night of July 14, 1900, the Palace, along with other Whiskey Row saloons, was filled with some of those gamblers, plus miners, cowboys, businessmen and bar girls when the fire alarm on the town's Courthouse Plaza sounded. A blaze was burning at the OK Lodging House on South Montezuma Street, and the flames quickly spread across Goodwin Street and continued up Whiskey Row. Before the flames reached the Palace, some enterprising patrons carried the saloon's oak bar



COURTESY SHARLOT HALL MUSEUM

and most of its liquor across the street to the town plaza.

By the time the fire made it to Gurley and Cortez streets, drinks were already being served in a makeshift Palace Bar. Over the next couple of days, a provisional tin building took shape, and on it, a sign read: "Brow's Palace, And Not Ashamed of It." There, Brow and his two new partners, Ben Belcher and Barney Smith, served customers and made plans to rebuild the saloon.

In 1901, at a cost of \$50,000, the new Palace Hotel and Bar reopened and

was considered the finest saloon in Arizona, where, once again, customers could belly up to the bar. Constructed of native gray granite, iron and ornamental bricks, the building boasted a central pediment atop its façade, which carried the seal of the Arizona Territory.

For the last 127 years, that same saloon has served cold beer and sarsaparillas to thirsty Whiskey Row patrons. The Palace is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Information: 928-541-1996. — Sally Benford

NATURE

Look at the Lovebirds

No. You weren't hallucinating. That green parrot you saw flying around Phoenix was real. And he's not alone.

IF THERE WERE AN AVIAN VERSION of *Survivor: Arizona*, most parrots would get voted off the show in the first episode. Yet peach-faced lovebirds — hand-sized green and blue parrots with faces the color of papaya — are thriving in the urban wilds of Phoenix and Tucson. The population of this non-native bird is estimated to be in the low thousands.

"Wild" lovebirds started cropping up in the late 1980s between Mesa and Apache Junction, just east of Phoenix. It's believed they either escaped or were set free by their owners — the birds are popular as pets because of their flashy good looks and gregarious charm. Escapes aren't uncommon, but rarely do they result in a population boom.

For example, if you were to release a rainforest-native parrot with a genetic hankering for tropical fruit and no instinct for finding water in the Sonoran Desert, the bird would fare about as well as a stray penguin. It might eke out a living on cracker handouts from neighbors, but it would hardly thrive.

The peach-faced lovebird, however, hails from the deserts of southwestern Africa, where it has cultivated keen abilities to seek water in Namibian cattle-grazing ponds, and forage for choice Angolan berries. In Africa, lovebirds live in small flocks, congregating from miles around to devour all the fruit



BRUCE D. TAUBERT

on a tree. They cleverly stake out farms, sometimes stripping fields of grain, fruit or vegetables in a matter of days.

Here in Arizona, the peach-faced lovebirds have found a kind of Utopia. Irrigation, bird feeders, prefab housing carved into saguaros by other birds ... the list goes on. Snakes, cats and hawks pose an occasional danger, but otherwise, lovebirds have no natural predators.

However, what's good for this parrot might be detrimental to other Arizonan birds. Scientists are growing increasingly concerned about invasive species taking over the habitats of native flora and fauna. Lovebirds can usurp saguaros, displacing other birds such as woodpeckers. And it might be only a matter of time before lovebirds start using farmland as a buffet table.

Many environmentalists advocate eliminating lovebirds before the population gets out of hand. The pro-parrot contingent, however, argues that so far there's no evidence they've done any harm. Plus, they're cute, people say. For now, this controversial little squawker's fate remains uncertain.

— Keridwen Cornelius

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

- On April 10, 1874, President Ulysses S. Grant issued a patent to Judge John T. Alsap for the original Phoenix town site, which comprised 320 acres costing \$550 per acre, including all expenses for services.
- On April 26, 1981, the largest bank robbery in U.S. history took place at the First National Bank of Arizona in Tucson — in all, more than \$3.3 million was stolen.
- On April 23, 1993, Cesar Chavez, a Mexican-American farm worker, labor leader and civil rights activist, died of natural causes at his apartment in San Luis, Arizona. He was born on March 31, 1927, near Yuma.

50 years ago
in arizona highways

Among other things, the April 1958 issue of *Arizona Highways* invited readers to explore the "lofty Chiricahuas ... the broad and sunny Sulphur Springs Valley ... and such modern places as Douglas, Bisbee and Fort Huachuca." Fifty years later, the gently rising foothills and mountains of Southeastern Arizona are still worth exploring.



THINGS TO DO Heart & Soul



23-26
april

WHEN YOU CONVERT THE heart and soul of Hispanic tradition into a sound, the air resonates with the lyrical harmony of guitars, violins, harps and trumpets. The sound is known as mariachi, and it's in the spotlight this month during the La Frontera Tucson International Mariachi Conference. This colorful music, used for hundreds of years to celebrate formal occasions in Mexico and the Southwest, will be the focus of a four-day event (April 23-26) that includes mariachi musicians dressed in traditional silver-studded charro costumes and strumming guitarrons (a deep-noted five-string guitar) and vihuelas (a high-pitched 12-string guitar). Originally created in 1983 to showcase the talent of music students from all over North America, the event now features workshops and a mariachi Mass, as well as several performances by professionals, students and ballet folklorico dancers.

■ Information: 520-838-3908 or tucsonmariachi.org/mariachi-roots.cfm.

JEFF KIDA

the Journal



COURTESY SHARLOT HALL MUSEUM

ALL ABOARD

Railroad hobbyists and enthusiasts will enjoy Winslow's annual Railroad Days (April 21-27). Highlights include more than 2,000 linear feet of model railroads, a historic photograph exhibit from the Old Trails Museum, archives from the Santa Fe Railroad and eclectic displays of railroad memorabilia.

■ Information: 928-289-2434 or winslowarizona.org/index.htm.

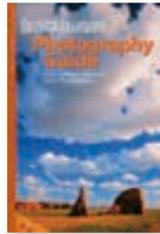
april
21-27

One for the Books

BIBLIOPHILES unite and head to Flagstaff for the 11th annual Northern Arizona Book Festival. The two-day festival (April 25-26) includes

readings, panel discussions, workshops and other events that celebrate the written word. Scheduled authors include Greg Pape, Tim Seibles and Jill Devine.

■ Information: 928-380-8682 or nazbookfest.com/index.htm.



april
25-26

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Photographer Edward McCain has spent many years in Southeastern Arizona shooting some of the most spectacular landscapes on the planet. Plan now to join him in November in the Chiricahua Wilderness for the area's dramatic display of fall color during a Friends of Arizona Highways photography workshop.

■ Information: 888-790-7042 or friendsofahighways.com. **AH**

COURTESY MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN FILMS



DON B. & RYAN B. STEVENSON

Ride the Rapids

1-30
april

IF YOU'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED the rush of the Colorado River from the seat of a raft, now's your chance — without getting wet. This month, IMAX theaters make a splash with a new 3D film featuring noted environmentalists Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Wade Davis as they journey down the Colorado with their daughters. *Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk*, which was directed by Academy Award-winner Greg MacGillivray and features the music of the Dave Matthews Band, explores the Grand Canyon and the issue of global water supplies. The film will be showing all month at the IMAX Theater in Phoenix's Arizona Science Center and in Tempe at Arizona Mills.

■ Information: Arizona Science Center, 602-716-2000, azscience.org; or IMAX Theater at Arizona Mills, 480-897-4629, imax.com/tempe.



IT'S A BLESSING

Blessed are the vintners — especially in Southeastern Arizona, where the weather can be unforgiving during the prime grape-growing season.

To ensure a good harvest, the owners of Sonoita Vineyard cover their (potential) losses by asking for a little celestial help during the Blessing of the Vineyard (April 19). Local clergy bless the vines, after which it's time to celebrate with a wine tasting, winery tours, live music and dancing.

■ Information: 520-455-5893 or sonoitavineyards.com.

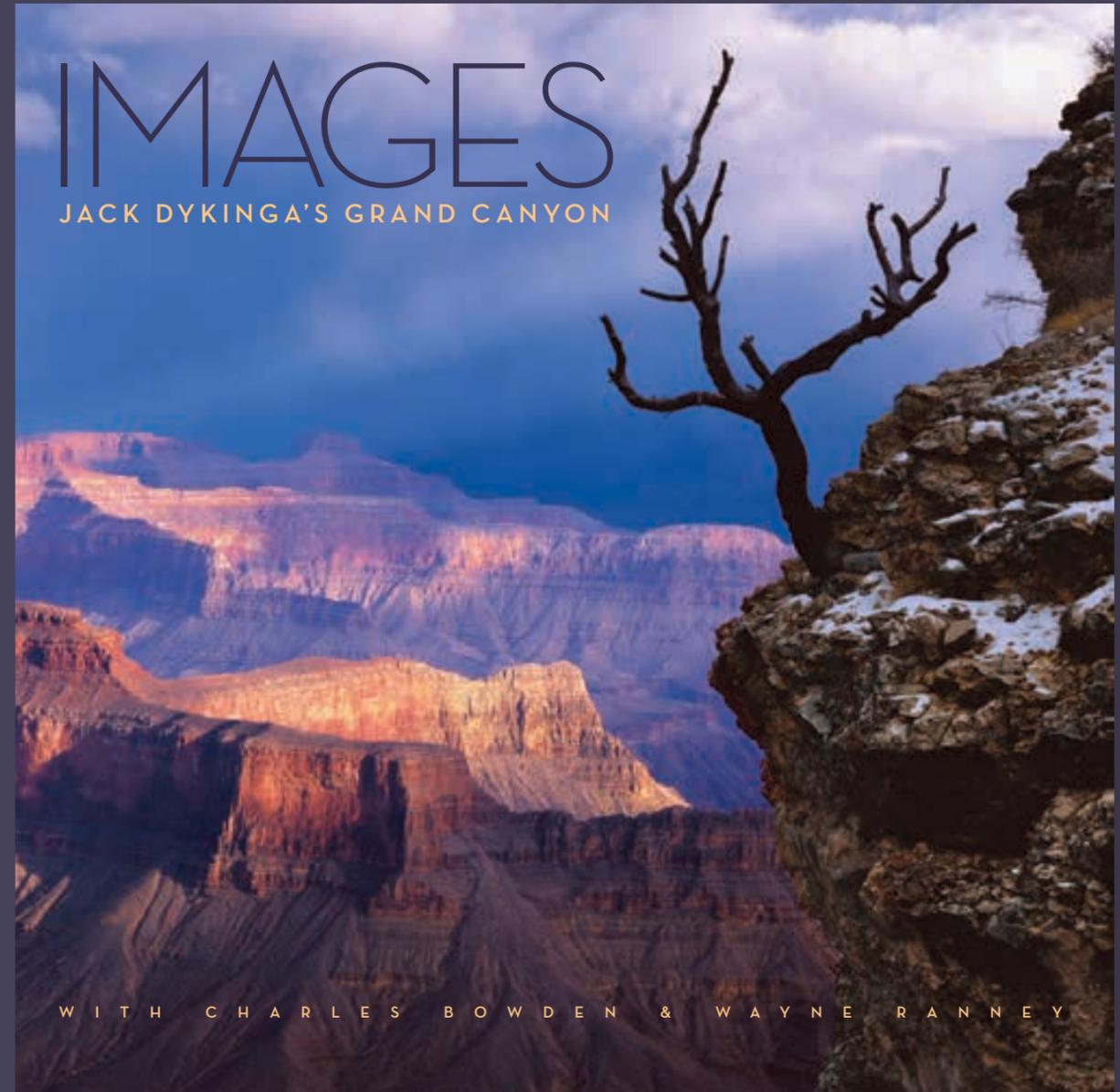
april
19

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Simply Grand!

For our new book, we combined the Seventh Natural Wonder with Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Jack Dykinga. The result — *IMAGES: Jack Dykinga's Grand Canyon* — is out of this world.



CIRCLING THE CANYON North. South. East. West. In this unique portfolio, which features 80 spectacular photographs, Jack Dykinga visits every side of the Grand Canyon — 35 sites in all. As he writes, "My hope is that you'll enjoy this visual journey and come to appreciate our nation's most precious treasure."

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

Offer expires April 30, 2008. Visit arizonahighways.com or call 800-543-5432 to order item #AGVH8 for \$33.95 (reg. \$39.95). Shipping and handling not included. You can also visit our retail location at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue in Phoenix.

on the

ROAD

When you're at the Canyon, you eat at El Tovar. Everybody knows that. But where do you go when you're in Page or Payson or Patagonia? It's not always obvious, so we've put together a list of 25 of the state's best places to grab a bite to eat. There are plenty of others, of course, but this should fill you up for a while. Bon voyage and bon appetit.  BY KELLY KRAMER

FORKS



W

When measuring the quality of a restaurant, there are three key elements to consider: food, service and ambience. The best restaurants, of course, get high marks on all three. Most, however, hit one or two — if they're lucky. And that's OK. Think about it. If there's a place with unbelievable eggplant Parmesan and friendly servers, you'll probably overlook things like peeling paint and bad lighting. That's how it is. What follows are some of our favorite restaurants from around the state. Needless to say, this is only a sample of what's out there, but it's a worthy sample that we think will come in handy the next time you hit the road. By the way, if you have a favorite restaurant that's not on our list, we'd love to hear about it. We can be reached via e-mail at editor@arizonahighways.com.

A LA CARTE Diners can enjoy L'Auberge Restaurant's French-accented fare indoors on linen-napped tables or al fresco on the banks of beautiful Oak Creek. Photograph by Geoff Gourley



CAFÉ ROKA

Bisbee

Pressure-fired bricks were relatively new in 1907, when Bisbee's Costello Building was constructed. But thanks to those bricks, the Costello Building was spared from a fire that leveled much of the mining town in 1908. Now, 100 years later, the building houses Café Roka, a three-level, internationally inspired restaurant that's been serving up some of Bisbee's finest fare since chef-owner Rod Kass moved into the Costello in 1993. Whether you're a sucker for sweet-potato strudel or have a hankering for New Zealand rack of lamb, the café has something for everyone, including history buffs. 35 Main Street, Bisbee, 520-432-5153 or caferoka.com.

BINKLEY'S

Cave Creek

Although the tiny township of Cave Creek is known mostly for being cowboy chic and chock-full of Old West honky-tonks, there's at least one restaurant where you might want to wear your dress boots. Under the guidance of chef-owner Kevin Binkley, Binkley's offers contemporary American cuisine that changes frequently — based on the availability of fresh, local ingredients and the seasonality of items that the chef must order in. So while one evening's cold appetizers might be hickory-smoked halibut with three-beet salad or

FUNKY, FANCY, FOODIE Café Roka's creative, vegetarian-leaning menu and historic building (left) embody Bisbee's artsy, old-meets-new vibe. Photograph by Edward McCain

NORTHERN EXPOSURE Ingredients fresh from Northern Arizona's farms and ranches shine in the cuisine (right) at Flagstaff's Brix, named one of *Condé Nast Traveler's* Top 95 New Restaurants in the World. Photograph by Geoff Gourley

Wellfleet oysters with marinated fingerling potatoes, the next week's entrees might include blue cheese-crusted rib-eye or bacon-wrapped pork tenderloin. 6920 E. Cave Creek Road, Cave Creek, 480-437-1072 or binkleysrestaurant.com.

PIÑON BISTRO

Cottonwood

With only a handful of linen-topped tables and a menu that incorporates market-fresh ingredients and homemade creations, Piñon Bistro is a favorite among Cottonwood locals and

tourists alike. Owned and operated by pals Terri Clements and Donna Fulton, the bistro is two parts funky and one part swanky. Decorated with fresh flowers and the works of local artists, the restaurant offers a menu that self-taught chef Fulton creates based on the season and the availability of fresh produce, meats and cheeses. And don't forget to explore the wine and dessert menus. They're loaded with delightful options, from blanc-de-blanc to Cabernet and homemade ice cream to decadent mud pie. 1075 S. State Route 260, Cottonwood, 928-649-0234.





BRIX
Flagstaff

Northern Arizona is a mecca for family farms and ranches. And so, Northern Arizona restaurants are turning to those farms and ranches to add the freshest produce, poultry and beef to their menus. Brix, located in the historic Carriage House in Flagstaff, is no exception. With a dinner menu that features such selections as braised Fox Fire Farm lamb shank, grilled Cedar River Farms rib-eye, a variety of artisan cheeses and a wine list that rivals any big-city eatery, Brix is to Flagstaff what

a place like Lon's is to Paradise Valley: the go-to spot for a delicious meal in an intimate, relaxing setting. 413 N. San Francisco Street, Flagstaff, 928-213-1021 or brixflagstaff.com.

KELLY'S BROAD STREET
BREWERY
Globe

No one would be foolish enough to consider a J.C. Penney store a "hot spot." But that's not to say that bars and restaurants housed in former J.C. Penney stores can't be. That's the case with Kelly's Broad Street Brewery. Located,

naturally, on Globe's historic Broad Street, which is home to buildings constructed in the early 20th century, Kelly's is a favorite among the locals. What's more, it serves up some pretty good food, albeit of the bar variety, and a handful of drink specials, along with a healthy helping of dancing and karaoke. 190 N. Broad Street, Globe, 928-425-0379.

EL TOVAR DINING ROOM
South Rim, Grand Canyon

Built from native stone and Oregon pine, El Tovar Dining Room at the El Tovar Hotel on the Grand Canyon's South Rim is one of the state's most famously historic restaurants. Although the dress code is casual, dining at El Tovar is often a more elegant experience than dining at a five-star eatery, primarily be-

cause several tables look directly out across the Canyon itself. That might explain why reservations are recommended as much as six months in advance. Well, that and a menu including dishes like wild Alaska salmon tostadas, natural lamb chops with roasted portobello demi-glace, and mesquite-smoked natural pork chops with Pinot Noir glaze. Grand Canyon National Park, 928-638-2631, ext. 6432.

RENDEZVOUS DINER
Greer

There's something particularly rustic about life in the White Mountains, and it's a characteristic that translates well into the local cuisine. Take, for instance, Greer's Rendezvous Diner. Built in 1909, the quaint little restaurant, which has been in business for a little more than 30

OFF THE EATIN' PATH Tucked away in tiny Cottonwood but worth the trip for any foodie, Piñon Bistro (left) serves haute food in a homey, funky setting. Photograph by Geoff Gourley

NARROW ESCAPE Shaped like and named after Manhattan's slim Flatiron Building, the Flatiron Café in Jerome (above) makes an ideal retreat for a homemade pastry and a coffee klatch. Photograph by Kerrick James



RAILWAY REDUX The Turquoise Room at La Posada Hotel (above) retains many of the original touches from its former railroad-car origin. Photograph by Nick Berezenko

years, is in one of the town's oldest buildings, and prides itself on down-home, homemade cooking. The simple menu features soups, sandwiches and a slew of just-like-mom-used-to-make desserts, along with chef-owner Pauline Merrill's famous sweet rolls, meatloaf, and biscuits and gravy. 117 N. Main Street, Greer, 928-735-7483.

FLATIRON CAFÉ
Jerome

Shaped like an upended shirt box, Jerome's Flatiron Café might be named for New York's famous building, but there's nothing flat about its assortment of breakfast and lunch entrees. Small and simple, Flatiron serves a variety of inexpensively priced plates, from omelets and fresh-baked pastries to original sandwiches, wraps, soups and salads. There are several innovative dishes on the menu, too, including smoked-salmon quesadillas and black-bean hummus. And although the food is

good, the coffee's even better. Whether you are a fan of flavored lattes or regular old joe, pick up a cup for your exploration of Jerome's other attractions — the former mining town is known for its art shops and "haunted" hotels. 416 Main Street, Jerome, 928-634-2733.

MATTINA'S RISTORANTE ITALIANO
Kingman

To the casual observer, Kingman might appear to be little more than a stopping point on the long and winding road to Las

Vegas. But this town, known as the "heart of Route 66," is home to more than 60 buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although Mattina's Ristorante Italiano isn't one of them, its building is old. In fact, the 106-year-old house recently underwent a major renovation. Despite the dust, chef Carlo Peddycoat still managed to whip up his signature fare following the restaurant's Mafia theme, including prime "Al Capone" cuts of beef, sinful shrimp-and-mascarpone ravioli and fresh, butter-drenched escargots. 318 E. Oak Street, Kingman, 928-753-7504.

CHA-BONES
Lake Havasu City

When it came to naming their steakhouse, Tom and Laurie Moses stayed close to home. A tribute to their college-aged son's nickname, Cha-Bones is a welcome departure from the typical bar/grill establishments that pepper Lake Havasu City. Here, inspired pastas, pizzas and chicken dishes prove the perfect complement to the restaurant's signature steaks and, of course, bones — five selections of mesquite-charcoal-broiled ribs, served with fresh vegetables and a savory starch.

And, naturally, where there's steak, there's wine. Cha-Bones' list includes plenty of inexpensively priced bottles, as well as a few "special occasion" reds, if you're so inclined. 112 London Bridge Road, Lake Havasu City, 928-854-5554 or chabones.com.

THE DAM BAR & GRILLE
Page

If a trip to Glen Canyon Dam is on your to-do list, prepare with a visit to the Dam Bar & Grille in Page. Here, a 30-foot etched-glass wall and a scaled-down version of the dam will wet your whistle until you can witness the real thing. So, too, will the Grille's selection of pastas, salads, sandwiches and steaks. The menu features standard bar fare as well as items for more sophisticated palates. Try the surf 'n' turf, a combination of bacon-wrapped filet mignon and snow crab legs, or the slow-roasted half-chicken in balsamic glaze. 644 N. Navajo Street, Page, 928-645-2161 or damplaza.com/dambar.html.

LON'S AT THE HERMOSA
Paradise Valley

Although they once dotted the Arizona landscape, authentic haciendas are few and far between in the state. Lon's at the Hermosa is one of the few. Once the home of famed artist Lon Megargee, Lon's is now one of the metro-Phoenix area's most intimate and beautiful restaurants, capable of accommodating 12 to 150 people. For a romantic dining experience, sit on Lon's patio, nestled perfectly in the shadow of Camelback Mountain, and sample chef Michael Rusconi's inspired creations. Typical appetizers include soups, seared ahi and braised beef short ribs, while entrees encompass the best of Southwestern cuisine, from roasted Fulton Valley free-range chicken breast with goat cheese

gnocchi to rack of lamb cased in sun-dried tomatoes and served with goat cheese herb grits, smoked peppers and Queen Creek olive jus. 5532 N. Palo Cristi Road, Paradise Valley, 602-955-7878 or lons.com.

VELVET ELVIS PIZZA COMPANY
Patagonia

Cecilia San Miguel has one mission and one mission only: to "introduce customers to delicious and healthy dining alternatives." And in the striking Southern Arizona town of Patagonia, that task is becoming less daunting, as more and more restaurateurs and chefs are turning to locally grown and organic produce, meats and cheeses. Consider, for example, the menu at Velvet Elvis, where San Miguel has combined the vibrant flavors of the Southwest with a dose of vintage kitsch to create such items as the "Pancho Villa" pizza, a combination of homemade beef chorizo, fresh tomatoes, yellow onions, cilantro, fresh jalapeños, and Asiago and mozzarella cheeses. The soups, salads and calzones are equally delightful — and the King would not have it any other way. 292 Naugle Avenue, Patagonia, 520-394-2102 or velvetelvispizza.com.

EL RANCHO
Payson

Arizona is known for its Sonoran-style Mexican food, and in that vein, this list would be incomplete without a couple of real Mexican restaurants. For more than 30 years, El Rancho has been plating some of the Southwest's finest fare — a fact that's been noted by the *Payson Roundup*, which consistently honors the restaurant as having the "best margarita in town" and as being the town's "best Mexican restaurant." And it's no wonder. El Rancho's menu is stocked with the requisite tacos,

chimis and burritos, along with a fine sampling of signature fare, including a bowl of piping hot green chile stew. 200 S. Beeline Highway, Payson, 928-474-3111 or elranchorestaurant.net.

PIZZERIA BIANCO
Phoenix

Chris Bianco is the king of pizza. Although contenders might dispute the claim, they'd be hard-pressed to prove it wrong, especially considering that Bianco is a 2003 James Beard Award winner and that his downtown Phoenix bistro was given an amazing 29 out of 30 points by the *Zagat Dining Guide*. In fact, the only person who disputes the claim is Bianco himself, who contends that it's not about him — it's about the pizza. That's a truth evident in every pie that leaves the wood-fired oven at Pizzeria Bianco, where most guests wait hours just to be seated. Although the menu is small, it's mighty, featuring a handful of decadent pizzas, handcrafted country bread and a selection of fresh, flavorful salads. 623 E. Adams Street, Phoenix, 602-258-8300 or pizzeriabianco.com.

CHARLIE CLARK'S STEAKHOUSE
Pinetop

Charlie Clark's is old — not in the Grand Canyon sense of the word, but old nonetheless. In fact, the two log cabins that currently house this steakhouse were built long before Prohibition. After the nation's liquor began flowing freely again in the early 1930s, Jake Renfro added on to the original structures and began operating his very own "Famous Log Cabin Cafe." Renfro sold the property to Charlie Clark in 1938, and ever since, hand-cut steaks, ribs and prime rib have become staples. 1701 E. White Mountain Boulevard, Pinetop, 928-367-4900 or charlieclarks.com.



Lane, Sedona, 928-282-1667 or lauberge.com/dining.

HOUSE OF TRICKS Tempe

Just a block or two away from busy Mill Avenue in downtown Tempe, House of Tricks has been letting the good times roll for more than 20 years. Here, chef Kelly Fletcher tackles French and Southwestern cuisine, wrapping the two styles up into a unique fusion of flavors. At the same time, wine manager Ryan Brown selects some of the finest bottles available, creating a list that rivals that of restaurants three times Tricks' size. And although this tiny restaurant is well endowed in the good-food department, dinner is as much about the experience as it is about the eats. Mature trees and a variety of colorful plants surround the patio, so book a table and enjoy the scenery. 114 E. Seventh Street, Tempe, 480-968-1114 or houseoftricks.com.

FEAST Tucson

There's nothing fancy about Feast. It's just a regular building in a regular old neighborhood in Tucson. What's special about the place is that it's a restaurant and a catering business — everything chef-owner Doug Levy creates is available for eating-in or taking out. With a menu that rotates twice monthly, Levy creates eclectic offerings perfect for constructing a made-to-order meal. Try a parsnip salad paired with seared opah, served over rice with yellow vegetable curry salad and fried garlic. Or, get

adventurous and taste any of Levy's other clever creations. For an after-dinner treat, or while you're waiting for your order, splurge on one of his homemade desserts, like a triple chocolate terrine or chocolate truffle cookies. 4122 E. Speedway Boulevard, Tucson, 520-326-9363 or eataatfeast.com.

RANCHO DE LOS CABALLEROS Wickenburg

There are plenty of resorts in Arizona, but not many of them are "ranch" resorts, like Wickenburg's Rancho de los Caballeros. You'll find plenty to do at this splendid retreat — from horseback riding and golf to hitting the spa or the pool — but when you're done, you'll want to try the ranch's restaurant. Featuring plenty of meat-and-potatoes-type meals, as well as signature dishes that highlight the flavors of the Southwest, this isn't your typical beans-and-franks cowboy restaurant, and that's a good thing. Among other things, try the Southern quail. It's pan-fried and served over fingerling potatoes with green beans and lavender butter. 1551 S. Vulture Mine Road, Wickenburg, 928-684-5484 or sunc.com.

PLAZA RESTAURANT Willcox

Stepping into Willcox is a little like stepping onto a Wild West movie set. It's in the heart of Apache country, which means it's a bit rugged. It's also smack dab in between Phoenix and El Paso. But that's not to say the area is a wasteland of good eats.

For casual family dining in Willcox, try Plaza Restaurant. It's open 24 hours a day and features Mexican food and American fare, from burgers and fries to a Friday night fish buffet that's popular with the locals. Plaza also offers takeout service, banquet facilities and an ultra-friendly service staff. 1190 W. Rex Allen Drive, Willcox, 520-384-3819.

RED RAVEN RESTAURANT Williams

Beyond its red front door, Williams' Red Raven Restaurant is a charming, intimate space, loaded with local artwork and plenty of charm. And beyond the kitchen doors, you'll find chef David Haines whipping up some of the finest meals in the area. His focus is on comfort food — the kind of food you'd want to eat snuggled up on a Sunday afternoon — but with a

decidedly fresh twist. Take, for example, Haines' basil-butter salmon served with cranberry-pine nut couscous, or his tenderloin of pork scaloppini. Add fine service to the great menu and the aforementioned ambience, and the Red Raven is one restaurant you'll want to visit again and again. 135 W. Route 66, Williams, 928-635-4980 or redravenrestaurant.com.

THE TURQUOISE ROOM Winslow

The Turquoise Room at La Posada Hotel and Gardens has its origins in a railroad car. In 1935, Mary Jane Colter designed the private dining car for the *Super Chief*, a train that ran from Chicago to L.A. She dubbed the dining car The Turquoise Room, and the modern version of the restaurant, opened in 2000, replicated many of the original accents — green brocade booths

and leather-and-wood chairs, to name a few. Just as elegant is The Turquoise Room's menu. It features a variety of entrees that incorporate fresh ingredients flown in from as far away as Ninilchik, Alaska, as well as plenty of homegrown items, among them piki bread made by local Hopi women. 303 E. Second Street, Winslow, 928-289-2888 or theturquoiseroom.net.

LUTES CASINO Yuma

Although Lutes Casino is currently one of Yuma's most beloved restaurants, it wasn't always like that. In fact, the building that houses the restaurant — which serves up popular diner-esque lunches and dinners — was once a pool hall where the patrons were notorious for illegal gambling and other bad behavior. Today, however, crowds line up outside

during the winter months when the weather's cool and sunny, and many of them order the special, a \$4.50 cheeseburger topped with an unusual condiment — a hot dog. 221 S. Main Street, Yuma, 928-782-2192.

BONUS: DOT'S DINER

In case you missed it, Dot's Diner is featured on the cover of this month's issue. Like the other 25 restaurants in the story you've just read, Dot's is one of the state's best. The 10-stool eatery, which is named in honor of Dot Bozeman, the restaurant's first cook and bottle washer, is a blast from the past if ever there was one. The next time you're in Bisbee, check it out. Old Douglas Road, Bisbee, 520-432-3567 or theshadydell.com. **AH**

Kelly Kramer is a Phoenix-based writer and a frequent contributor to Arizona Highways.

BIN 239 Prescott

When it comes to wine cafés, Bin 239 ranks right up there among the state's best. Located on charming Marina Street in Prescott, this quaint café offers an amazing selection of wines at reasonable prices, from Oakville Cabernets to Argentinian Malbecs. What's more, the Bin's food menu features fresh selections of soups, salads, cheeses and bruschetta, and the friendly staff is always happy to offer its recommendations for food and wine pairings. For the ultimate Bin 239 experience, sample from the tasting menu. At four wines for \$12, it's a bargain and a blast. 239 N. Marina Street, Prescott, 928-445-3855 or bin239.com.

L'AUBERGE RESTAURANT ON OAK CREEK Sedona

Chances are plenty of pretty things come to mind when you're thinking about Sedona, like red rocks and sunsets and all of the other clichés. But L'Auberge Restaurant is just as pretty — not only because it sits on a prime piece of real estate on the banks of Oak Creek, but also because of its stunning menu. The chef keeps things interesting, mixing up the menu daily to reflect changing themes and changing seasons. It's a method that works, having garnered the restaurant a "Best of Award of Excellence" designation from *Wine Spectator* for 14 consecutive years. 301 L'Auberge

WELL RED Co-owners Rozan and David Haines (above) dish up a warm welcome at Red Raven, an epicurean outpost in the railway town of Williams. Photograph by Geoff Gourley

FEAST, NOT FAMINE Tucson's Feast (right) redefines ho-hum takeout with its imaginative fare, which you can order online, pick up to go or savor in the restaurant's cozy confines. Photograph by Edward McCain





Twisting Their Arms

A PORTFOLIO BY NEIL WEIDNER

You wouldn't know it by looking at them, but Joshua trees are in the lily family. Really. We're not making that up. Despite their lack of any family resemblance, these crooked monocots are well worth the drive to Western Arizona.



Don't hate them because they're not beautiful. Like Quasimodo, the Joshua tree's freakish looks mask an admirable complexity. Its hirsute trunk and dagger-like leaves belie its sensitivity to weather patterns and an endearing reliance on a clever moth. Its tough, stringy limbs have fueled miners' steam engines and woven Indian baskets.

Endemic to the Mohave Desert, the Joshua tree graces its namesake national park in California and parts of Western Arizona. Fantastical forests twist and sprout along U.S. Route 93 to Kingman — dubbed the Joshua Forest Scenic Parkway — and on Grapevine Mesa near Lake Mead.

How long they've been there, no one knows, because their fibrous trunks lack rings to count. Most scientists peg them at 100 to 300 years old, but some say they could be as old as a thousand years.

The Joshua tree's survival depends entirely on winter freezes and a symbiotic relationship with the yucca moth. A pregnant moth gathers a golden ball of pollen and flies to another Joshua tree, laying her eggs in a flower. She then rubs the pollen along the stamen, pollinating it. When the seeds germinate, some of them become food for her larvae; others grow into new Joshua trees.

If you think about it, it's beautiful.

— Keridwen Cornelius



LUNAR LANDSCAPE Backlit by a full moon and pink-streaked sky, the grotesque, spiky contours of Joshua trees (pages 24-25) lend an otherworldly presence to a surrealistic landscape in Western Arizona.

■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.

PRECIPITATION, PLEASE The Grand Wash Cliffs (left) serve as a backdrop for Joshua trees that survive the Mohave Desert's arid conditions with biological adaptations such as sword-shaped leaves, which channel rain toward the plants' bases. Bristly, green, spearlike leaves form a bulwark around a Joshua tree's white, waxy blossom (above).

■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



DESERT VESSEL With spent leaves drooping like shaggy beards, Joshua trees tower over other desert plants at the base of monolithic Shiprock near the Joshua Forest Scenic Parkway, whose 54 miles run from Wickenburg to Wikieup.

■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



SCARRED ARMS Freezing temperatures damage the tips of Joshua trees (left), causing them to bloom, then form branches.
■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.

PRICKLY PRAYERS Named for the biblical figure who led Israel into the "Promised Land," Joshua trees holding spiky arms skyward reflected the Mormon pioneers' hope for successful settlement in the West (above).
■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.

CLOSE CURLS Joshua tree blossoms never fully open (right), but remain curled, resulting in the plant's classification as an indehiscent fruited species.
■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1. 

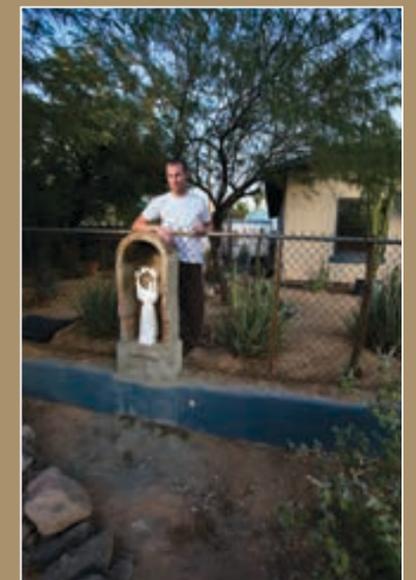




LEFT BEHIND

When a Tucson man discovered a sinkhole in his front yard, he was curious. When he started digging around and found bones, he was speechless, and more than a little concerned. Turns out, his 90-year-old bungalow was built on an old cemetery, and even though the headstones were moved, as many as 6,000 bodies were left behind.

BY JANA BOMMERSBACH



MAN OF HONOR When a neighborhood was built over a Tucson cemetery in 1909, the headstones were moved to Holy Hope Cemetery (left), but many bodies were left behind. Moses Thompson (above) is honoring two of those dead, a man and girl found under his property, with a shrine of St. Francis, the patron saint of reunited families. Photograph by Edward McCain

ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, TUCSON

Did she have a favorite doll? How ready was her laugh? Was her mother holding her when she died? No one really knows anything about the 4-year-old girl dressed in a cotton gown — a gown closed in the back with nine small milk-glass buttons. Five more buttons adorned the pillow on which her head rested. Buttons, after all, were one of the few things in ready supply on the frontier to “fancy up” a plain item, and it was necessary to give this young lady some measure of finery as she was placed in her coffin.

Had she been sick? Was she felled by an infectious disease? She was probably contagious, because the rest of her wardrobe was stuffed around her feet. None of the material would last, but 120 years later, all 58 buttons were still there.

Sadly, we'll never know the girl's name. However, we can guess that she was called *mija* — my darling girl — by the Hispanic family who cherished her. We can also guess that she didn't die alone, because directly below her, in what was once an official cemetery of a small town in the Arizona Territory, lay a coffin similar to hers — the remains of a father, an uncle or a cousin, perhaps?

Whoever he was, he was buried with his pockets full: a “shield nickel” minted as early as 1867; a heavily worn 1877 Liberty quarter; an 1886 Seated Liberty dime. This was real money back then, and normally wouldn't have gone to the grave. Maybe his people were afraid of infection, so they just left him intact when they put him into the Douglas fir coffin with brass handles and 56 diamond-shaped copper appliques.

As in the case of the little girl, we'll never know the name of this man who died at the age of 25. We'll never know if he played an instrument or if he prayed or if he'd fathered any children. What we do know is that both of their bodies were abandoned by the village of Tucson in 1909, when the Old Court Street Cemetery was closed to make way for a subdivision of 88 homes. We know this because in October 2007, their coffins were exposed when a sinkhole appeared in the front yard of what is now the Dunbar/Spring neighborhood of downtown Tucson.

If these graves had been marked with a wooden cross, it long

ago crumbled to dust. If they were ever memorialized with a headstone, someone took it away decades ago, leaving no clue of what this land still held.

Moses and Kelly Thompson — he, an elementary school counselor, she, a pediatrician — had no clue about any of this when they bought their Craftsman bungalow in 2006. The couple was thrilled to find their dream home in the historic part of Tucson.

“There was a split in the earth and I feared a broken pipe,” 32-year-old Moses Thompson recalls. “I dug down until I hit a board. I reached in and found three diamond-shaped copper ornaments, and then I pulled out finger bones.”

He showed his discovery to Kelly, hoping she'd explain that this wasn't what he'd feared. “Is there any chance it's an animal?” he asked. She took one look at the carpals and dorsals in his palm and answered with a simple “no.”

Thompson called the city, which sent over an archaeologist who's getting used to digging up old graves in the city. They found a cross below the girl's casket and knew there had to be a second grave underneath. And that's when the Thompsons learned their beautiful old home was built above 100 graves.

“The neighborhood lore is that families had to pay to move the graves when the city decided to close the cemetery,” Thompson says. “The poor couldn't afford it. [The city] ran an ad in English about removing the bodies, so non-English speakers were out of the loop as well. I can imagine a father or grandfather coming to visit the grave and finding houses built — not knowing what had happened to their loved ones.”

It's disturbing for the Thompsons to know that they're living on top of a cemetery, but not for the obvious reasons. “I'm kind of superstitious, and I get spooked,” Moses says, well aware that Hollywood has made three horror movies about people living above cemeteries. “But I feel more of an injustice to the families than I do creepiness. It looks like the developer just moved the headstones and left the people behind.”

Moses took a personal day off from work when the authorities excavated, watching the little girl's remains come out of the

ground, piece by piece. “What surprised me is how thorough the process is,” Moses says. “One person is in the hole taking out 5-pound buckets full of dirt, which is put on a sifter screen. Another person is doing measurements of what they find, and a third is drawing everything. Her head came out in separate pieces, and the skull fell apart. It struck me that she had all her baby teeth — her teeth were just perfect.”

Only later would he think about how much this little girl resembled the Latino children he counsels at Manzo Elementary School. After that, he no longer thought of this as just a skull with perfect baby teeth; he thought of her as a little girl who didn't rest in peace.



J. Homer Thiel wanted to be an archaeologist since he was a boy growing up on a farm in Michigan. He now holds a master's degree from Arizona State University in anthropological archaeology, specializing in human history from 1700 to 1950. He led his team to the Thompsons' front yard to dig up the latest of 14 bodies found since the 1940s at the Old Court Street Cemetery site.

These days, Thiel is a private scientist with Center for Desert Archaeology, and he probably knows more about the old graves and graveyards of Tucson than anyone in town. The 44-year-old can rattle off cemetery records from memory.

Court Street was the town's third official cemetery — the third time town fathers had tried to place a cemetery out of the way of a growing outpost. It was “out in the country” then, far away from the village struggling to make a go of life in a remote part of the Old West. From 1875 to 1906, Court Street was Tucson's only cemetery, divided into a Catholic section and another part for everyone else. Although the village was responsible for this graveyard, it didn't take very good care of it, and within two years of opening, local newspapers were calling the condition of the cemetery a “disgrace.”

But then, in 1880, the railroad came to town; nothing in the Old West impacted life more than the arrival of this lifeline to



SACRED GROUND More than 6,000 graves could still remain under the Dunbar/Springs neighborhood (above), constructed over the Old Court Street Cemetery. One archaeologist estimates that only 10 percent of the bodies were moved to Evergreen Cemetery and Holy Hope Cemetery (below). Photographs courtesy Arizona Historical Society, Tucson

the world. “Now you could order any product through the mail and have it delivered [by rail],” Thiel explains. “It transformed Tucson from an adobe town into one with new buildings that were more Victorian.”

The Court Street Cemetery ended up between the new railroad tracks and the northern edge of the community, and it was obvious this was the direction of growth. By 1906, Old Court Street Cemetery joined its predecessors and became the town's third cemetery to be in the way.

Businessmen found another new cemetery site “far out” in the country. They promised to move pauper graves, while village officials told others they had to move their own family members and buy a gravesite in the new cemetery. Plots sold for \$50 (the equivalent of nearly \$2,000 today), a cost few could even consider. The move began in 1907, and in 1916, the village council declared Court Street an “old and abandoned cemetery.” Immediately thereafter, the village sold the land to a developer, who subdivided it into 88 lots and sold them for the princely sum of \$10,000 — an amount equal to nearly \$200,000 today.

The graves were supposedly moved to the new Evergreen and Holy Hope cemeteries on present-day Oracle Road — so far out that Tucson would never grow to them. One of the great ironies is that today they sit in the middle of Arizona's second largest





ally a new idea in this country, and it came about primarily as a way to protect ancient Indian graves from being looted for pots and other treasures. The federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act became law on November 16, 1990. Arizona's laws followed.

"It's sad those individuals didn't get moved," Madsen says. But he knows not everyone would be upset. There's a diverse set of philosophies when it comes to graves, he says. "I've gone to meetings with people in tears over a single individual. And then there are other meetings where people say, 'Let's move on.'"

But he envisions an outcry if Tucson were to try to abandon its Evergreen and Holy Hope cemeteries these days. "I think people would be really upset, because a cemetery is supposed to be safe, where bodies aren't disturbed and can rest in peace," Madsen says.

Tucson's media has covered this intriguing story, but sometimes in a tone that seems almost cavalier: "Your Underground Neighbors," one headline read, noting that the neighborhood had a "grave problem."

Moses Thompson doesn't think it's funny. He thinks the media is trying to trivialize "what amounts to desecration." Homer Thiel doesn't think it's funny either. "I wonder about the people we find," he says. "Did they have a happy life? I think it's sad that the cemeteries were built over, but that's history."

If it is any comfort, Madsen notes, the people of today treat these bodies with far more respect than they received in their own time. Soon after the little girl and her male counterpart were unearthed in the Thompsons' front yard, Madsen sent a note to the Catholic Bishop of Tucson, asking if the church would accept the remains and have them reburied.

The Catholic Diocese of Tucson readily accepted. The church has a special place in its All Faiths Cemetery for the remains of people whose faith cannot be determined, and it's there that many of those unearthed in Tucson finally rest in peace.

Moses and Kelly Thompson planned to be there when the little girl was buried for the last time. They've also erected a shrine on their own property to commemorate her and the unidentified man — a statue of the patron saint of reunited families, St. Francis, now graces the site where they lay for all those years.

"You know, the roots of a mesquite tree grew right into the casket and through the skull and straight down her body," Thompson says. "I feel like a part of the girl is in that tree." ■■

Jana Bommersbach is a longtime contributor to Arizona Highways. She's won numerous national magazine awards, and her book, The Trunk Murderess: Winnie Ruth Judd, won the prestigious Don Bolles Award for Investigative Reporting.

city, with thousands of cars racing by every day.

Thiel has studied the gravestones in Evergreen and Holy Hope, looking for those moved from Court Street. He reports a disturbing truth: "I found only 100 headstones that came from Court Street, and 54 of them had no bodies, just stones."

Anyone who's shocked by that reality doesn't know the history of cemeteries in Tucson, he says.

In 1776, when the Spanish established a presidio that would become Tucson, they designated a cemetery site within its walls — a spot that now sits under the old County Courthouse and Presidio Park. It was used until the Mexican Army left the fort in 1856. No records remain of the bodies buried there because the soldiers used the record books for cigarette papers, Thiel says. However, he thinks at least a thousand bodies are packed into the small space. Eventually, the presidio graveyard was abandoned and forgotten, and the land was used for a growing town. About 15 years ago, officials took 20 complete skeletons and parts of another 80 people out of the old Presidio Cemetery.

Tucson, which likes to call itself the "Old Pueblo," got a new cemetery in 1862, thanks to the U.S. military. It was called the National Cemetery, but it didn't last long.

By 1875, the town thought the land could be better used, so the cemetery was closed, although some bodies may have been buried there later. The burial ground was sold to developers, who first subdivided it for houses, and later converted it to commercial use — a bowling alley, bank, lawyers' offices, a parking lot. Today, that land is in the heart of downtown, where Pima County wants to build its new courthouse. As a result, the old cemetery is finally being excavated (see *Rest in Peace*, page 37).

Unfortunately, the Old Court Street Cemetery will probably never be uncovered, because 88 homes — now prized for their historic designs and significance — stand above it. Still, one wonders how many bodies remain under the neighborhood.

"We know from Catholic burial records that there were more than 4,600 burials in the Catholic section of the Court Street Cemetery where we found the girl," Thiel says. He notes there are

A SAD DISCOVERY Archaeologist J. Homer Thiel unveils his drawing of the remains of a man and young girl found in an unmarked grave under Moses and Kelly Thompson's property. Photograph by Edward McCain

no records to count the numbers of Protestant, Jewish and fraternal groups buried there, but he thinks maybe there are another 2,000 or so. "My guess is only 10 percent were moved," he adds.

That means more than 6,000 graves might still exist under the homes in the Dunbar/Spring neighborhood.



John Madsen has several titles at the Arizona State Museum in Tucson, but he's commonly known as the "burial coordinator." He'd prefer that task were labeled the "repatriation coordinator," but it's the same thing — when bodies are unearthed, he's the one who administers Arizona's laws on disturbed graves.

It's not just that he deals with these things every day, it's that he sees the big picture of antique gravesites. "What happened in Tucson is not unique," he says. "If you look around the country, you find a lot of cemeteries being abandoned."

For example, a large African-American cemetery has been uncovered in New York City; part of Savannah, Georgia, is built over a cemetery; small plots on ranches or family property have been forgotten over the years in many states.

But nobody — not Madsen, Thiel, nor the State Historic Preservation Office — can cite another example of a community repeatedly building over its official cemeteries.

Under Arizona law, Madsen notes, the same thing could happen today — and is happening on private land. "The laws were written to protect property owners," he notes. "They say you shall not disturb bones, but if you just cover them over, that's OK." So landowners who discover graves on their property have the option of simply ignoring them. Or they can contact the Arizona State Museum to have the bones removed and reinterred.

All of this might sound ghoulish to a society that looks upon cemeteries as hallowed ground, but protection of graves is actu-

✦ ✦ ✦ R E S T I N P E A C E ✦ ✦ ✦

"We weren't quite sure what we'd find, but we were surprised at what we found."

Roger Anyon is the cultural resources program manager for Pima County, and these days, he's fixated on the excavation of the old National Cemetery in downtown Tucson, which is making way for the county's new courthouse.

He says the county was well aware a cemetery had once existed on part of their building site, but they thought it had been moved more than 130 years ago.

"In the 1880s, people were told to disinter their loved ones and rebury them in the new Court Street Cemetery," he says. "But we've discovered that was a very rare occurrence. Most people weren't moved."

He says it looks like about 1,130 bodies will be taken from this old cemetery before they're done. He knows the number is astonishing, but so is the price tag for finally moving this cemetery: \$15 million. That makes this the largest and most expensive cemetery excavation in Arizona history.

Despite the cost, Anyon says, Pima County is trying to do the right thing by these bodies; some of the deceased were founders and early leaders of this historic Arizona city.

Before a shovel went into the ground, he says, the county conducted two background studies and spent a year talking with "descendant groups," who likely have people buried there — including veterans, Hispanics and Native Americans.

They will do "no destructive analysis" of the remains that are carefully removed from the site, but plan to rebury all the bodies — either through their relatives, if identities can be established; through descendant groups, if their cultural affiliation can be learned; or in the All Faiths Cemetery in Tucson.

Excavations began in November 2006 and were scheduled to be completed this spring. In October, a report will be made public on whatever identifying factors were learned from the remains, and the public will then have six months to respond. Reburials are expected in April 2009.

"Today it strikes us as really strange that these cemeteries were abandoned and people forgot they were there," Anyon says. "I'm not sure about the thinking back in the 1800s, but clearly, it was different than the values we have today."

— Jana Bommersbach



The Mason's entrance gate of the Court Street Cemetery. ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, TUCSON

Artwork in Progress



THREE DECADES AGO, LEDA AND MICHAEL KAHN BEGAN WORK ON ELIPHANTE, THEIR EVOLVING MONUMENT TO THE WORLD OF VISUAL ART. IT'S AN UNUSUAL COMPOUND, TO SAY THE LEAST, BUT FOR THE ACCOMPLISHED ARTISTS, IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE.



NO ORDINARY ORGY A smorgasbord of colors and textures (left) entices visitors to feast visually at Eliphante, an art environment showcasing the work of artists Leda and Michael Kahn in Cornville, 21 miles southwest of Sedona.



“They arrived penniless, surviving on food stamps, wanting nothing more than a place to pitch a tent and plant a vegetable garden.”



Visit Leda Kahn and you'll likely find her sitting at the kitchen table of her Cornville home, a cordless phone and a copy of *The New York Times* within reach. A more banal scene is hard to imagine, except that Leda's kitchen — refrigerator, sink and all — sits inside an open-air ramada that hums with the music of cicadas instead of the drone of air conditioning. Around the kitchen in all directions stand the whimsical buildings, sculptures and galleries that make up Eliphante, the 3-acre sculptural village she calls home.

Eliphante unfolds like a dream along the banks of Oak Creek. Various writers have described the place as an oddity and a work of art in the tradition of Los Angeles' famed Watts Towers. Free-form buildings dot a field of Astroturf scattered with sculptures of stone and driftwood. At the center stands a subterranean art gallery called Pipedreams, named for the crown of twisted pipes rising 30 feet from a curvy roof, dappled in primary colors.

For Leda and her late-husband, Michael, Eliphante represented a life's work. Now Leda worries about how to preserve it. Leda is past 80. Michael, who suffered from Pick's disease, died last December. Leda would like to find a way to keep Eliphante running after she's gone. Even more, she wants to find a home for Michael's paintings, so he'll be remembered as the great artist she believes he was.

Eliphante is a monument to art, but it owes as much to the generosity of nature and the Kahns' friends. Michael turned the bounty of driftwood from Oak Creek into sculptures and mosaics, tunnels and doors. The couple dragged rocks from nearby washes and fitted them together to form cool, smooth floors. They troweled rammed earth onto building walls. Gifts of stained glass and fabric became windows and wall coverings. Chipped pottery, beads and tapestries encrust the walls like jewels. The Kahns even embedded the truck they rode in on.

Michael and Leda arrived in Sedona in 1977 with nothing but an idea. Michael, whose art education included the prestigious Art Students League of New York, had a vision for seven large

canvases, but no space to paint them in the couple's cramped quarters in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Max Ernst drew inspiration from the famed red rocks of Sedona, and Michael thought he could, too. So the Kahns built a makeshift camper on an old flatbed Ford and headed west. They called the truck Botchy because their friends told them it looked like a botched job, but it got them where they were going.

They arrived penniless, surviving on food stamps, wanting nothing more than a place to pitch a tent and plant a vegetable garden. That's when they met Bob and Joan Crozier, who were looking for caretakers for land they owned in Cornville. Michael and Leda didn't take the job, but the Croziers let them live on three acres anyway. The Kahns erected a wooden shack, using cardboard and old rugs for insulation, and lived in it while they worked on a permanent home, and they never stopped building.

The first building was the compound's namesake, Eliphante, so-called for its entrance, which rolls outward like an elephant's trunk. They used it for musical gatherings. Next came the vaguely hippo-shaped Hippodome. It was originally meant to be Leda's studio, but Michael's creative impulses took over. He embedded a mattress into the floor, fashioned a conical stand-up hot tub, and added a loft, a small office and an indoor kitchen to use during inclement weather. When it was done, they moved in.

In 1996, with help from friends David O'Keefe and Michael Glastonbury, the Kahns broke ground on their most ambitious undertaking. The new building, Pipedreams, would display “the

CREATIVE PARTNERS Leda (above) and Michael Kahn, who died last December, share a moment in the personal paradise they created at Eliphante.

ENTHUSIASTIC ART Putting all they had into it, the Kahns created Pipedreams, a serpentine exploration of Michael's artistic evolution within 2,000 square feet of partially underground space, including a floor-to-ceiling glass-and-ceramic mosaic (right).



BOLD STROKES To the end of his life, Michael worked in the bold colors characteristic of his exuberant style (left).

TRUNK SHOW Eliphante's namesake trunklike entrance (above) leads to a spacious room the Kahns formerly used for musical gatherings.

NO SWIMMING The Hippodome's painted-cement floor (below) resembles an overflowing pond cascading into the kitchen.



BALANCED SCALE A 6-foot-tall balanced-rock sculpture (right) stands in simple counterpoint to the carved-door exit from Pipedreams (below, right).

CANVAS FRIDGE Caretakers Lonnie Haught and Vicky Kennedy relax in the outdoor kitchen (below), where even the refrigerator became a canvas.



process," an exhibit of Michael's paintings that documents his transition from representational to abstract art. The interior of the 2,000-square-foot subterranean gallery flows in a circuitous path leading visitors through intimate, fabric-draped exhibit spaces highlighting one painting at a time. An assortment of pillows and orphaned chairs encourages lingering. There are fabric rainbows, carpet mosaics and stained-glass portals. A giant tassel hangs near the exit door, which is painted with the word "maybe."

"Maybe. That's what Michael felt about life," Leda explains. "Everything is maybe. There are no expects."

Living life with no expects hasn't always been easy. For many years, the Kahns were poor, and art always took precedence over comfort. But if the lifestyle has taken its toll on Leda, it doesn't show. Though her skin is brown and sun-creased, she looks younger than her years. Her silver hair remains thick and soft, and her brown eyes, gentle. Her hearing has begun to fade, but Leda's mind remains sharp, thanks, perhaps, to a mostly vegetarian diet and the *New York Times* crossword puzzle.

Michael was diagnosed with Pick's disease in 2004, a form of right frontal lobe degeneration for which both cause and cure are still undiscovered. The disease robbed him of the ability to communicate. Still, he continued to paint and build, collecting driftwood and rocks during daily walks along Oak Creek and adding them to the sculptural forms and groundwork at Eliphante.

Preserving that work has been Leda's toughest challenge. She'd like an organization like The Nature Conservancy to take over the property, and she hopes to donate Michael's paintings to a museum. Her various attempts to secure these ends

fill a binder. Recently, the Provincetown Art Association and Museum accepted a painting of Michael's for their permanent collection: a small victory, but a start.

Despite the hardships, Leda can't imagine living anywhere else. When she was a child, one of her favorite books was about a girl who got stranded on an island. The girl made everything from the materials that came her way and built a life. Leda believes her life has turned out like that of the heroine in that book. "It's a blessed life," she says.

Back in the Hippodome, Leda watches the screen of a small TV as she fast-forwards through a DVD of a French art documentary to a short segment about Eliphante. Throughout most of the film, Leda provides the narrative. But in a scene in which Michael and Leda appear together, Michael says, "Together, we got everything."

"I'm not sure what he meant by that," Leda says. "But it makes me weep every time." ■■

Kathy Montgomery is a Mesa-based writer and a regular contributor to Arizona Highways.

The father-son photo team of Don and Ryan Stevenson have visited numerous art galleries and exhibitions, but nothing compares to the unique open-air setting of Eliphante along serene Oak Creek near Cornville.

when you go

Location: Cornville.

Hours: Eliphante is open on a limited basis through Blue Feather Tours in Sedona. The "Artist Extreme Home" tour is a four-hour tour that includes a visit to a vortex.

Fee: \$85.

Travel Advisory: Eliphante is best enjoyed alone or with one or two people. It's not appropriate for large groups.

Information: 877-733-6621 or BlueFeatherTours.com.



Stronghold Canyon

The Dragoon Mountains of Southeastern Arizona are bizarre and beautiful. See for yourself — the views from the dirt roads are out of this world.

THE DRAGON MOUNTAINS sit brooding in the distance. What stories will the rock castles tell us today? What acts of magic will they perform?

Photographer Edward McCain and I begin our winter venture into this special range with high expectations.

We've been here before, and know what the experience offers — choice hiking trails, fine picnic spots in the shade of rustling Emory oaks, and great views from dirt roads that won't cause you or your vehicle to spring a leak.

But the bizarre, creature-

like boulders of the Dragoons make the experience different each time, depending on the weather, the light and how it hits them, and your own state of mind. It sounds strange to say, but the rocks here are full of personality. They seem to dance, change shapes and

colors, and even stare down at you with their granite eyes.

Cochise, the Dragoons' most famous former resident, noted their human quality in a meeting with Arizona's Territorial governor. "For a long time, the only friends [Cochise] had were the rocks,

and behind them he had concealed himself, and they had often protected him from death by warding off bullets," Governor Anson P.K. Safford recounted.

The Dragoons stand on a relatively flat desert plane, giving travelers a good look at them on approach. To get to Stronghold Canyon West, we choose Middlemarch Road, a washboard track that begins north of Tombstone and runs through mostly flat mesquite and greasewood desert.

After 9.9 miles, we reach Forest Service Road 687,

the main access road. It's a twisting, northbound roller coaster that bears deep slashes from recent rains. The road, one of the area's most scenic, contours the west side of the Dragoons, cutting through fields of yellow grass dotted with yucca plants.

Every change in the afternoon sun brings us a different view of the mountains, and even though FR 687 runs only 7.3 miles before veering to the right onto Forest Service Road 688 into Stronghold Canyon West, the Dragoons indulge us with

DRAGONS' LAIR The sun sets peacefully over Cochise Stronghold (left), the former bulwark of Chiricahua Apache Chief Cochise, whose warriors watched from pinnacles and swooped down on unsuspecting enemies.

many mood changes in that short distance.

Some of the most striking moods are found at Slavin Gulch, where the rocks part to welcome foot travelers. Hikers love this mysterious spot, as do photographers.

The road into West Stronghold parallels a plank-and-pipe fence, and in just 3 short miles, it shows off the full wonder of the Dragoons. The rocks tower above us, and seem to move with the car as we go deeper into the mountains' embrace.

The sensation intensifies as the road narrows, along with our field of vision, and pretty soon we're limited to ghostly cottonwoods and alligator junipers scratching at our doors, and those rocks glowing down.

I point out that it's like being stared at by mischie-

vous giants. But McCain is lost to the horizon. His eyes have settled upon the spires, pinnacles and rock domes above. There's one in particular. "Look," he says, "it's two parents and their baby. See, right up there."

He's pointing out two large standing rocks, with a third smaller rock leaning against the other two for support. Seeing people in the spires' wild shapes makes an interesting game that visitors have played for decades.

On our drive, I have with me an article written in 1964 by Grace McCool. In the rocks she found a nun in robes, and "a forever landlocked shark and a frog with rounded eyes, among other fantastic forms."

I search for the nun, but she is lost to me. That's not surprising, because everyone

SLAVIN' AWAY The Slavin Gulch Trail (below) starts off bone dry but drops into a riparian gulch, where songbirds, coati mundi and coues deer can be seen among sycamore and cottonwood trees.





WELL-TRODDEN Middlemarch Pass (left), the halfway point for military trekking from Sulphur Springs Valley to Tombstone, has historically been trodden by ranchers, miners and indigenous peoples.

who comes here sees and feels something different.

At the end of the road, we hike through the catclaw, manzanita and oak brush along Forest Trail 279. It leads us deeper into Cochise's lair, the place from which he watched his beloved homeland change forever.

The toughness of the landscape provides a kind of template to his character. By walking where he walked, we can glimpse how he lived, what he prized and what Western settlement took from him.

We also can understand how he held out so long, in this maze of caves and natural forts and bulwarks that his enemies found so impenetrable.

We spend the last part of the day at Council Rocks, immediately south of the West Stronghold road off Forest Service Road 687K, a spur of 687. At this spot in 1872, Cochise met to make

> travel tips

Vehicle Requirements: Four-wheel-drive is recommended. A high-clearance vehicle is probably sufficient for careful drivers in dry conditions. Portions of Forest Service Road 345 are very rocky, as are portions of Forest Service Road 688. Although rutted in places, Forest Service Road 687 is in generally better condition.

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

Travel Advisory: Forest Service signs advise travelers to drive only on marked roads.

Additional Information: Douglas Ranger District, Coronado National Forest, 928-364-3468 or fs.fed.us/r3/coronado.

511 Travelers in Arizona can visit az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more.



CENTURIES UPON CENTURIES A century plant (a.k.a. agave) spikes the southern end of the Dragoon Mountains — a deeply faulted limestone-and-granite range, where the geology reveals ancient floodplains and shifting layers of the Earth's crust.

■ For more back-road adventures, pick up a copy of our new book, *The Back Roads*. Now in its fifth edition, the book (\$19.95) features 40 of the state's most scenic drives. To order a copy, call 800-543-5432 or visit arizonahighways.com. **AH**

> route finder

Note: Mileages are approximate.

- > **From Tucson, drive east** on Interstate 10. Take Exit 303 at Benson and follow State Route 80 almost to Tombstone.
- > **Just before town, turn left** (east) onto Middlemarch Road and drive 9.9 miles to the Coronado National Forest boundary, and the intersection of Forest Service Road 687 and Forest Service Road 345.
- > **Turn left (north) onto FR 687**, and after 2.8 miles, go to the entry to Slavin Gulch on the right side of the road.
- > **Drive 4.5 miles** farther north on 687 to its intersection with Forest Service Road 688.
- > **Turn right onto FR 688**. Follow the steel rail-and-pipe fence into Stronghold Canyon West. The road ends after 2.9 miles, and drivers must turn around and retrace their route back to Middlemarch Road.

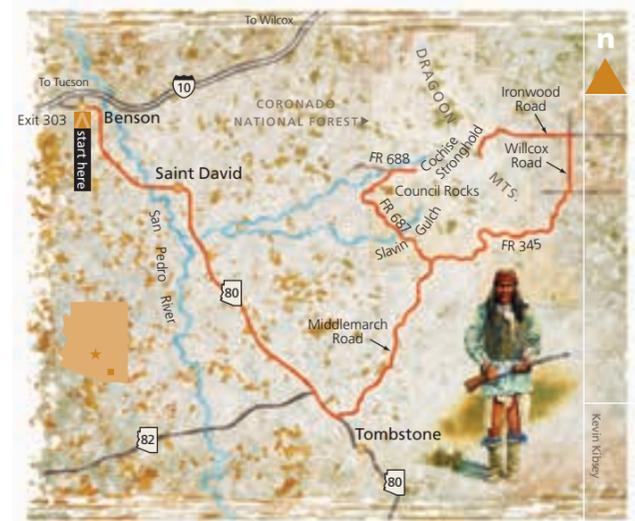
peace with O.O. Howard, the so-called praying general.

The Chiricahua leader made the best deal he could, forcing Howard to center a new reservation on Apache Pass, rather than in New Mexico. The reservation idea didn't last, but Cochise's famous words still echo: "Hereafter, the white man and the Indian are to drink of the same water, eat the same bread, and be at peace."

I love pondering the history made here. McCain's interests are more short-term. As the fading light brings the Dragoons to even more vibrant life, his instincts have gone hyper, and he is racing down the road, camera and tripod in hand, trying to beat the sunset and find the perfect spot to photograph.

What must it be like to make a living chasing light? But I understand his excitement; everything we could want is right here with us now.

A jackrabbit bounces through the brush. The air turns snapping cold and the night songs of the coyotes begin. We watch the rocks turning rosy in the sunset, a silver moon hanging above them, and before long, the falling shadows will find every crack and defile, until the Dragoons go black.



South Canyon

If you want to escape the 5 million people on the South Rim, this small corner of the Grand Canyon offers some incredible scenery.

THERE'S NEVER A SHERPA around when you need one. And right now, I think I need one. I'm standing at the head of South Canyon Trail, and I'm looking at a route that drops away steeply.

The first mile of this trail in the eastern part of Grand Canyon National Park is the most difficult — it descends 1,060 feet down a talus slope that ends at South Canyon's stream bottom. At that point, the hiking gets a little easier. The trail zigzags across the streambed, which requires quite a bit of rock-hopping. By the time you're done, it'll feel like 2 miles have been stretched to 6.5 — as if the Park Service deposited the trail into a low-yield savings account and is now trying to live off the interest.

After reaching the streambed, continue down the canyon about 3 miles until you reach the top of the Redwall limestone. Here, the path will lead you up and around

the Redwall narrows on the north side of the canyon. The hike concludes with a final steep descent from the top of the Redwall limestone to the Colorado River.

I'm pretty tired when I finally reach the water. I knew the trail was going to be difficult, but I also knew that this small corner of the Canyon offers some incredible scenery.

I work as a Grand Canyon river guide, and I think this is one of the most beautiful and historically interesting sections on the entire Colorado River. Vaseys Paradise, a fern-shrouded waterfall, bursts from the Redwall limestone a few hundred feet downriver. Maybe that's why ancestral Puebloans used South Canyon from A.D. 1050 to 1150. By the way, petroglyphs and a few ruins on the rock ledge above the river also can be explored.

After a lengthy nap, I bait my fishing pole and wade

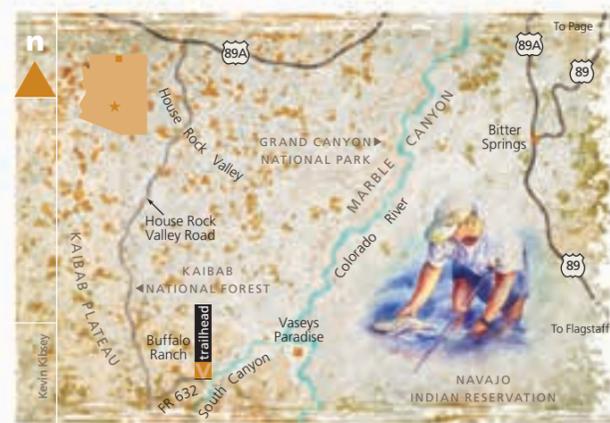


into the large eddy that circulates in front of South Canyon. A hot frying pan, butter, lemon and herbs await. Turns out, I'm not the only one trying to catch his dinner this evening. In the cool air, hundreds of violet-green swallows and stealthlike bats swoop and swirl through the air, catching insects.

Like a lot of trails in the Grand Canyon, this one isn't

ROCK BOTTOM Rocks etched with petroglyphs stud the riverbanks (above) along the South Canyon Trail. Vaseys Paradise (right), named after a botanist who traveled with explorer John Wesley Powell, rewards weary hikers with a lush cascade of water and ferns.

for novice hikers, but if you can handle 6.5 miles of challenging terrain, a fishing pole, and birds whirling through the air, then South Canyon is right up your alley. ■



trail guide

Length: 6.5 miles one way.

Elevation Change: 2,500 feet.

Difficulty: Strenuous.

Payoff: A quiet trail in the eastern part of Grand Canyon National Park.

Location: 67 miles south and west of Page.

Getting There: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 89 for 61 miles to U.S. Route 89A at Bitter Springs. Turn onto U.S. 89A and drive to House Rock Valley Road (Forest Service Road 8910) at Mile Marker 559 and turn left (south). Follow this road south approximately 18 miles to Forest Service Road 632 and turn left (east). Drive 1.5 miles, and as you approach the buffalo ranch, just short of the ranch fence, turn right and drive 1 mile to the South Canyon trailhead.

Warning: The streambed through which you'll be hiking is prone to flash flooding, especially during monsoon season. The best time to do this hike is mid-April to mid-June or mid-September to early November.

Travel Advisory: Permits are required for overnight camping.

Additional Information: 928-638-7864.



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