

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

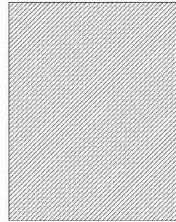


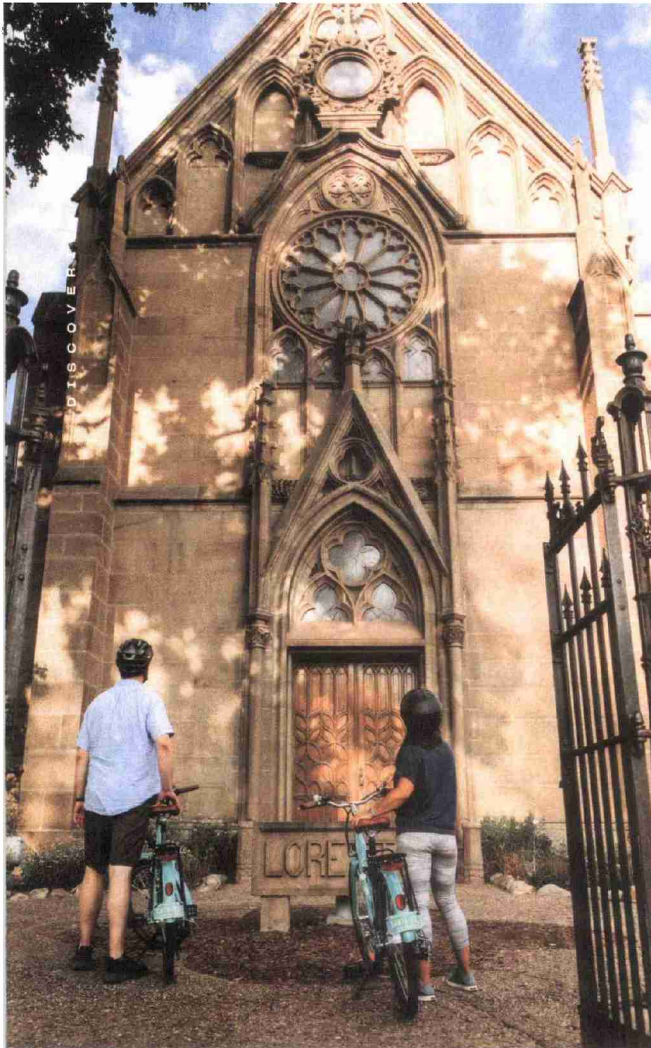
A Love Letter to Italy

DESTINATION OF THE YEAR

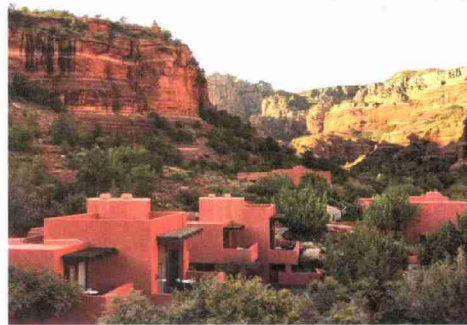
DECEMBER 2020

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Clockwise from far left: Admiring Santa Fe's Loretto Chapel on a bike tour with Heritage Inspirations; beef empanadas at Mariposa, in Sedona, Arizona; the adobe casitas at Sedona's Enchantment Resort.



Sunshine State of Mind

With new hotels, buzzy restaurants, and unique outdoor experiences popping up, the desert towns and wide-open spaces of the American Southwest are ripe for rediscovery. **BY TANVI CHHEDA**

TUCSON, ARIZONA

Occupying a former motor lodge, the recently opened hotel **Tuxon** (thetuxonhotel.com; doubles from \$96) pays tribute to the Desert Modernism movement, with 112 rooms done up in sleek lines and eye-popping geometric tiles, plus an original boomerang-shaped pool. Within walking distance is **MSA Annex** (mercadodistrict.com/annex), an open-air marketplace with art galleries and shops. Splurge on the prickly-pear-infused serum at the boutique **Mesa** (fb.com/shopatmesa). For a Wild West-style adventure, sign up for the "Wrangler for a Day" experience at **Tanque Verde Ranch** (tanqueverderanch.com; doubles from \$165), during which

the property's lead wrangler, Marty Orenstein, teaches basic horse-riding skills, such as how to lope and trot.

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

The Sunbelt town has seen an explosion in thoughtfully designed hotels over the past few years. The newest kid on the block is the **Adero Scottsdale** (aderoscottsdale.com; doubles from \$211), a family-friendly resort spread across 17 acres of rugged Sonoran Desert. The hotel is located within a Dark Sky Community, so guests can experience some next-level stargazing. In Scottsdale's Old Town, the 5,400-square-foot **Merchantile** (themerchantileofscottsdale.com) is a one-stop retail hub for Arizona-made jewelry, macramé art, and leather goods. And at Frank Lloyd Wright's **Talisin West** (franklloydwright.org), a new audio tour lets visitors explore the architect's winter retreat and studio at their own pace.

SEDONA, ARIZONA

In Red Rock Country, the wellness-centered **Enchantment Resort** (enchantmentresort.com; doubles from \$359) recently debuted a multipurpose activity center with technical apparel, a bike-rental station, and an exhibit on the area's hiking trails. For dinner with a view, snag a table at the **Vault Uptown** (thevaultuptown.com; entrées \$19-\$44), where Sedona's famed sandstone scenery comes with shareable bites like short-rib tacos rubbed with achiote paste. Or make room for the "gaucho plate" and other

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: AMANDA POWELL/COURTESY OF HERITAGE INSPIRATIONS; COURTESY OF SCOTTSDALE; COURTESY OF ENCHANTMENT RESORT

Latin-inspired dishes at **Mariposa** (mariposasedona.com; entrées \$28–\$42), one of five restaurants the self-taught chef and restaurateur Lisa Dahl operates around town.

ALBUQUERQUE

Duke City has been quietly reinventing itself for years. At the newly made-over **El Vado Motel** (elvadoabq.com; doubles from \$115), a roadside icon dating back to 1937, the bright, contemporary rooms have log-beam ceilings and art by local painter Darryl Willison. Meanwhile, in the Highland Business District and Nob Hill neighborhoods, **Modern Albuquerque** (modernabq.org) hosts architectural tours that offer an up-close look at the city's 350-plus Midcentury Modern landmarks. For another perspective on the city's skyline, book reservations at **Ten 3** (ten3tram.com; entrées \$29–\$53), the year-old fine-dining restaurant at the top of the Sandia Peak Tramway.

SANTA FE

In the Southwest, locals beat the winter blues by “taking the waters,” or soaking in outdoor spring-fed pools. At the 70-acre **Ojo Santa Fe** (ojosantafe.ojospa.com; doubles from \$225), guests can unwind in mineral-rich mud baths under the shade of cottonwood trees. Sign up for an e-bike tour of Santa Fe's historic churches organized by New Mexico tour operator **Heritage Inspirations** (heritageinspirations.com; \$155). Nearby, in the revitalized Railyard District, savor sweets like cardamom rice pudding at **Opuntia** (opuntia.cafe), a pint-size café overflowing with potted plants.



▲ Soaking in a spring-fed thermal pool at Ojo Santa Fe.