

Westward Bound

ROOTED IN HISTORY WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF NEW AND NOTABLE VENUES, COLORADO'S WESTERN SLOPE IS ON OUR RADAR.

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Thanks to new hotels, restaurants and a burgeoning wine country, Colorado's Western Slope—the portion of the state west of the Continental Divide—is quickly sliding into the travel limelight. From Grand Junction, buzzing with boutique hotels and glampgrounds, to the teeny town of Gateway flanked by red rocks, it's time to rethink Western Colorado. Here's what not to miss.

Getting There

Nonstop flights are available from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT) on Thursdays and Sundays via Allegiant Air.

GRAND JUNCTION

Vibe: down-to-earth and outdoorsy

Where to Sleep

Opened in 1908 by husband-and-wife William and Charlotte Ponsford, the recently revamped 16-room **Hotel Melrose** is artfully appointed with stylish, mountain chic

design touches such as rich navy-hued walls, black-and-white photos, kitchenettes with microwaves and mini refrigerators, and an outdoor area with firepits. After strolling through downtown, grab a bespoke cocktail at the on-site watering hole **Melrose Spirit Co.**, which features a neon pink sign depicting “This Must Be The Place.”

Poised along the Colorado River and just minutes from downtown, **Camp Eddy** boasts an RV park and a fleet of Airstreams and tiny homes appointed with boho-modern accessories and all the comforts of home including a queen bed, TV, kitchenettes and Wi-Fi. For guided mountain bike excursions with **GJ Adventures**, ask for the guest discount at the front desk.

Where to Dine

With a brand-new location downtown, **Bin 707 Foodbar** has been a city staple for more than 11 years, offering inventive fare such as elk tartare paired with preserved plum tapenade and béarnaise sauce, and the Binburger layered with frisée, tomato and white cheddar. Save

room for dessert with the infamous gluten-free milk bar “crack” pie served à la mode.

Housed in the former Bin 707 Foodbar space, **Jojo's Dinette** is the latest venture of the owners of Bin 707 Foodbar and TacoParty. It showcases Southwestern-inspired regional cuisine including sunchoke hush puppies with cucumber, serrano and sorrel salsa verde and cotija cheese, and a tempura-fried ruby trout sandwich on a potato bun topped with piñon romesco mayo, radicchio slaw and tomato.

Where to Wander

Bucolic **Belli Fiori Lavender Farm** is lined with 1,110 lavender plants of 11 varieties. Their specialty boutique is stocked with homemade lavender-infused hand salve, lavender seasoning salt and scented candles.

Established by California transplants Lisa and Dave Proietti, the family-run property is Colorado's mini version of Provence. The farm is also home to the family's **Highlands Distillery**. Housed inside a yurt-turned-bar, the distillery offers libations like the elevated blueberry lemonade on draft with housemade vodka, blueberries, lemonade and muddled mint, or the Mesa Massif with gin, Fever-Tree tonic water, lime juice and a lime garnish. On a sunny day, snag one of the red Adirondack-style chairs and order a charcuterie board, pan pizza or an Italian-style sandwich.

Located just 15 minutes from downtown, **Colorado National Monument** is a 20,000-acre natural outdoor playground home to roaming bighorn sheep, mule deer, and countless plants and wildflowers. It features cliffs, mesas, rock formations and canyons, and more than





Belli Fiori Lavender Farm



Camp Eddy

40 miles of hiking trails for all levels. For one of the most scenic drives in the country, don't miss **Rim Rock Drive**, a 23-mile winding road with overlooks. (Be sure to check road conditions this summer.

PALISADE

Vibe: laid-back wine country

Where to Sip

With a backdrop of Mount Garfield and the Book Cliffs mountains, **Carboy Winery at Mt. Garfield Estate** pours an assortment of wines from malbec to blanc de blanc. Can't decide? Try a tasting to sample five wines including a 2022 rosé and a 2019 cabernet sauvignon.

Winemaker Ben Parsons, founder of The Infinite Monkey Theorem in Denver, opened **The Ordinary Fellow** winery and vineyard five years ago with varieties ranging from a 2020 sparkling rosé to a 2022 blanc de noirs. Occupying a former peach-packing warehouse, the tasting room is outfitted with wooden high-top tables, bistro stools, a leather sofa and a wooden sign depicting

the phrase "Humble wine for the curious mind."

Vines 79 Wine Barn, a 2-acre vineyard opened by winemaker Juliann Adams and her husband 11 years ago, produces wines like the signature Cowboy Cab Reserve and Silver Star Syrah. Inside the Wine Barn, sip wines in an old west-inspired saloon decked with vintage newspaper-clad walls, wine barrel tables and



TWP Winery and Farmhouse



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VISIT GRAND JUNCTION, GATEWAY CANYONS RESORT & SPA AND OTHERS



Vines 79 Wine Barn

old-fashioned "reward" signs for famous outlaws Billy the Kid and Jesse James.

Where to Sleep

Painstakingly overhauled by owners Edwin Mocke and Shari Cahill, whose paths initially crossed on an architectural project in Denver, **TWP Winery and Farmhouse** feels like a secluded country escape. Shari expertly layered the four-bedroom inn, which is enveloped by views of Mount Garfield, with antique textiles, an antler chandelier, handwoven baskets from South Africa and artwork by Erté, Victor Klauss and Shonda Bowen. Just don't forget to set the morning alarm. Breakfast, prepared in-house, is not to be missed.

Originally built in 1955 and purchased in 2018 by husband-and-wife Jody Corey and Jeff Snook, the revamped 17-room **Spoke and Vine Motel** charms with modern barn doors, red wire accent chairs and Volkswagen bus prints. After a day of exploring, grab a glass of wine from nearby family-run estate winery **Mesa Park Vineyards** or a housemade cocktail at **Motel Bar**.

Where to Dine

Sourcing from local Grand Valley farms and purveyors including Ghost Rock Farm, Pea & Posy and Black Bear Orchards, **Pêche Restaurant**'s seasonal menu—served in a clean-lined space with wood-clad accent walls—features selections such as Palisade heirloom tomatoes with fennel and onion, and grilled chicken with pommes frites and a farm salad.

Owned by Jody and Jeff of Spoke and Vine Motel, modern taqueria **Fidel's Cocina & Bar** pays homage to their dog—the namesake of the restaurant. Order the huevos rancheros topped with two eggs over easy, or the elk chorizo tacos filled with Monterey cheese and caramelized onions.

GATEWAY

Vibe: unexpected and off-the-beaten path

Where to Sleep

A result of the vision of former Discovery Channel founder John Hendricks, the 500-acre **Gateway Canyons Resort & Spa** features Southwestern-inspired rooms. It is surrounded by red rock within the Unaweep Canyon, once home to gold prospectors. Activities here are endless—from an on-site spa and auto museum showcasing more than 50 cars, to mountain biking and fishing.

Where to Wander

For a snapshot back in time to the gold mining days, take a short drive south to **Hanging Flume**, a defunct, open-water chute built in the 1880s by Montrose Placer Mining Company. Once stretching 13 miles long and suspended 75 feet above the Dolores River Canyon, the engineering marvel affixed to the side of the sandstone canyon wall (only remnants remain) is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. ■

Gateway Canyons Resort & Spa

