

TRUE *phoenix*



Modern cool at the FEZ lounge



Cacti everywhere



Phoenix is a town of growing culinary sophistication



The 50-acre Desert Botanical Gardens houses one of the world's largest collections of desert plants

Never again to be mistaken as a desert tumbleweed town, Phoenix's secret is out. The city that anchors the Valley of the Sun—or just “the Valley”—has grown up and out, stretching across 500 square miles and clocking in as the fifth-largest city in the nation. Famous for its miles of fairways, cosmopolitan restaurants and luxury spas, Phoenix is a welcoming oasis for the weary. And, with a remarkable 334 days of sunshine a year, it's an ideal winter escape for visitors craving a healthy dose of vitamin D.



THE *low*down

Michele Lee, a Valley resident since she was four years old, is a professional makeup artist and hair stylist. She's glammed up models and actresses on a variety of photo shoots and even on a feature film. Having recently worked with Joan Rivers and Steve Nash, she dishes on the fame-worthy spots in Phoenix.

TOP JAVA: La Grande Orange Grocery, on 40th Street, is the place to go for coffee. It's modern and hip.

REFURBISHED COOL: The Parlor, on 16th and Camelback, is the invention of my friend Aric Mei. He serves up fresh, local fare in a refurbished hair salon. It's small and understated. The squash soup is amazing, and there's even an herb garden.

FAVE BOUTIQUE: Frances Vintage, on Camelback, is my favorite spot if I'm looking for a cool gift. They carry unique trinkets and fancy stationery, too.

WINE AND DINE: I'll go to Postino and order the same thing every time: a mixed green salad with turkey and a great glass of pinot noir to wash it down.



Pamper yourself at the Royal Palms Resort and Spa

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THREAD COUNT

Having welcomed countless movie stars, entertainers and presidents over its 80-year history, it's no wonder the **Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa** (800-950-0086) was crowned the "jewel of the desert" in 1929. High style it by the pool where Marilyn Monroe once swam or channel Irving Berlin's creative spirit—he wrote "White Christmas" poolside. Head to the top floor of the **Hyatt Regency Phoenix** (602-252-1234) and enjoy a breathtaking 360-degree view of the Valley while dining at Compass, Arizona's only revolving restaurant. Experience urban luxury in the heart of downtown at **The Ritz-Carlton, Phoenix** (602-468-0700), where worries melt away while sipping afternoon tea among stuffed leather couches and English-inspired artwork. Trying to plan the perfect proposal or desperately seeking a romantic getaway? Look no further than Romance Director Robert Vickery at the **Royal Palms Resort and Spa** (800-672-6011). Reserve a casita or villa nestled among the manicured gardens and, by all means, book one of the unique bliss packages offered by the Alvalora spa.



FOOD FIX

Choosing where to eat in the Valley may be the most difficult decision you make. After all, you are surrounded by some of the finest resorts and chefs in America. An old-school favorite among locals, **Durant's** (602-264-5967) is the place to go for steak. For Moroccan-inspired fare, head to **FEZ** (602-287-8700), a modern restaurant that is beloved for its creative cocktails and French fries. Devotees wait hours for a table at tiny **Pizzeria Bianco** (602-258-8300). Owner Chris Bianco, a James Beard award-winner, has achieved national rock-star status for his amazing pies topped with house-made mozzarella and organic produce. Once a department store, now a chic night spot, **Hanny's** (602-252-2285) delivers quick, tasty eats in a futuristic atmosphere. The seductive aroma of freshly baked bread makes **La Grande Orange Grocery** (602-840-7777) the perfect weekend breakfast spot.



Special delivery at Postino Winecafé



NIGHT OUT

Satisfy your craving for a late-night fix of artfully prepared sushi and sake at **Zen 32** (602-954-8700). Oenophiles can imbibe at **Postino Winecafé** (602-274-5144). This converted post office offers up a great wine list and 11 varieties of bruschetta. **Stoudemire's Downtown** (602-307-5825) is the place to hang and watch the game while you spy on your favorite sports legends and celebs. The dark and moody **Merc Bar** (602-508-9449) is perhaps the best testament to Phoenix's rising cool cache—its only other outpost is a well-known NYC hot spot. Subdued lighting and cocktails made with freshly squeezed juices mean there's no better place to be on a Friday than **Side Bar** (602-254-1646).

DON'T MISS

Proving Phoenix is more than just dust and cacti, the **Desert Botanical Gardens** (480-941-1225) hosts several nightly events, including Las Noches de las Luminarias, Agave on the Rocks and a weekly Jazz in the Gardens concert. Famous for its camel-shaped head, **Camelback Mountain** is the trendy mountain to hike. Bring lots of water and be prepared to sweat. Yes, there are farms in the desert. Case in point: **The Farm at South Mountain** (602-276-6360) is home to three delightful restaurants showcasing freshly harvested fare. Tired of hoofing it? Take a ride on the **Valley Metro Rail** (602-253-5000), Phoenix's first venture into light-rail transportation.



The Farm at South Mountain is a welcoming desert oasis

What
\$100
 Buys You in
 Phoenix

- A few hours of games followed by overcooked nachos for you and six of your best friends at **Dave & Buster's** (www.daveandbusters.com).
- A Navajo toothpick holder and pill box from the **Heard Museum Gift Shop** (www.heardmuseumshop.com). Mom will love it.
- Dinner cooked by guys with names like Cookie and Gus at the Cowboy Sundown Cookout at the **Rawhide Western Town and Steakhouse** (www.rawhide.com).
- A two-hour trail ride for you and your sweetheart with the dudes at **Ponderosa Stables** (www.arizona-horses.com).
- A couple rounds of golf at any of Phoenix's six public courses. The recently finished **Agua Golf Course** (602-237-9601) is our favorite.



Fine shopping at Desert Ridge Marketplace



Spectacular views at Desert Canyon Golf Club



RETAIL THERAPY

You can get a workout *and* that perfect pair of new shoes by exploring one of Phoenix's sprawling malls. The **Biltmore Fashion Park** (602-955-8400) is one of the most well rounded, with stores as diverse as Saks Fifth Avenue and Arizona Humane Society's Pet Boutique. **Desert Ridge Marketplace** (480-513-7586) is home to more than 110 stores, restaurants and bars. The Melrose Neighborhood, in central Phoenix, boasts vintage-clothing and antique shops such as **Phoenix Metro Retro** (602-279-0702). Step into **Hollywood Regency** (602-277-5765) for old-school baubles and accessories. The first to earn the status in Phoenix, the Roosevelt Historic District is an eclectic mix of residential bungalows and art galleries such as the first-rate, artist-run **five15 arts** (602-256-0150).



STONE'S THROW

Fountain Hills is a quick, 30-minute jaunt from Phoenix, but it feels like you've stepped into a different world. Separated by mountains from the urban sprawl, the quiet hamlet boasts incredibly scenic views. Tee up amid stunning vistas at **Desert Canyon Golf Club** (480-837-1173), then snag a patio seat at **Waters Edge Restaurant** (480-816-3515) to see the town's famous fountain—considered one of the tallest in the world—shoot 560 feet into the air. Drive 45 minutes due north to the truly Western town of **Cave Creek**. Stop in at **Rare Earth** (480-513-6252) for a glass of wine and to peruse artwork by local artist Rhea Ashcraft. 📖

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events JAN FEB 2010

JANUARY 17
P.F. CHANG'S ROCK 'N'
ROLL ARIZONA
MARATHON
Wesley Bolin
Memorial Plaza

Over 30,000 runners were cheered on by more than 70 bands last year. It's a blast for both runners and spectators.



JANUARY 18-24
BARRETT-JACKSON
COLLECTOR CAR EVENT
Westworld of Scottsdale

Check out the cherry collectible cars, like a blue-and-white 1961 Nash convertible, at this world-renowned event. Who knows, you might just buy one.

FEBRUARY 6-MARCH 28
ARIZONA
RENAISSANCE
FESTIVAL
U.S. Highway 60,
at Apache Junction

Head out of town on the weekends to enjoy a truly medieval experience at this amusement park with a 12-stage theater, 30-acre circus and a jousting tournament.