

944

FASHION
ENTERTAINMENT
LIFESTYLE

SEPTEMBER 2010



*FALL
FASHION*
on the prowl

ATLANTA
DALLAS
DETROIT
LAS VEGAS
LOS ANGELES
MIAMI
ORANGE COUNTY
PHOENIX
SAN DIEGO
SAN FRANCISCO

944.COM

ISABELLA LINDBLOM

New Mexico has long drawn athletic and outdoorsy types in search of adventure and other nature-centric getaways, but many people might be surprised to find that the state's capital city of Santa Fe can offer visitors a wholly different kind of escape, one that's luxurious and yes, even indulgent, despite its sometimes dusty Old West reputation.

The cool temperatures (think averages in the 70s and low 80s May through October), picturesque mountain ranges and rich local culture all lend themselves to making Santa Fe a luxury-loving traveler's perfect playground. In fact, this year the city is an exceptional destination choice, as not only does 2010 see Santa Fe's 400th anniversary, but just months ago, American Eagle airlines (an affiliate of American Airlines) clued into the city's growing tourism industry and launched a new direct flight from Los Angeles (just two hours) into the "Land of Enchantment."

Visitors flock to Santa Fe, nestled amid the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains

some 7,000 feet above sea level, to take in the divine art, clean air, world-class spa treatments and fresh New Mexican-style cuisine. And no matter the season, tourists thrill at the opportunity to discover such exquisite wares as beaded Native American jewelry, handmade leather goods, delicate baubles made from sterling silver and precious gemstones, colorful textiles, priceless antiques and one-of-a-kind furniture pieces, all made by highly skilled craftsmen and women who live and work in the region year-round.

Head to the Palace of the Governors, located on the Plaza in Santa Fe's historic district, in the mornings to snag the most

authentic keepsakes. There, each day, dozens of Native American artisans, mostly Pueblo and Navajo Indians, gather under the adobe building's overhang to display and sell pottery, snacks and plenty of unique jewelry, among other things. All items for sale directly in front of the building are guaranteed to be handmade, including the silver, which must be nearly pure, as mandated by the Native American Vendors Program, overseen by the Museum of New Mexico organization.

Just a few blocks away from the Plaza and worth a peek is the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, housing works by the famous modern American painter known for her powerful abstracts of flowers and other objects, and who had homes near Santa Fe for the last several decades of her life. At the museum, visitors can study more than 3,000 of the artist's works, showcasing different stages in the artist's career.



Into the Land of Enchantment

NEW WORLD LUXURY MEETS OLD WORLD STYLE IN SANTA FE

Fine art is certainly a central component of Santa Fe's popularity among tourists, and the area is considered second only to New York as America's largest art market. The celebrated Canyon Road, located a short distance east of the historic district, presents more galleries per block than anywhere else in Santa Fe and is a collector's paradise. Artists and art dealers have been drawn to Canyon Road for years, collectively building the section of town into a premier destination for art lovers from all over the world.

For the novice or seasoned art collector, a few Canyon Road galleries are musts. The

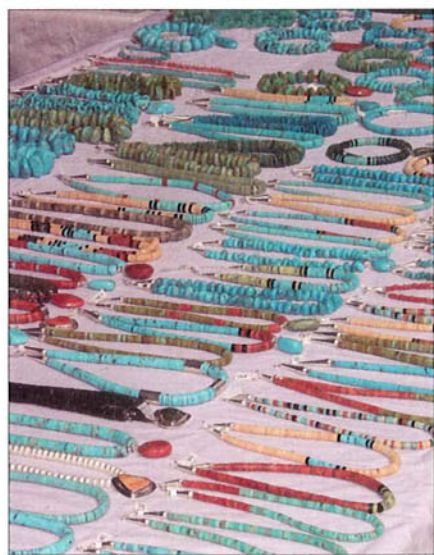
everything from painting and sculpture to ceramics and glass; and a slew of others displaying remarkable contemporary works.

Of course, Santa Fe doesn't offer tasteful excursions without also providing sophisticated room and board. After all, what fun is tracking down authentic handcrafted jewelry and fine art if a person doesn't have quarters equally as lovely to call home for the night? For luxe accommodations, book Encantado, an Auberge Resort located just outside of town and nestled into the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

The first and only AAA 5-Diamond

to find cuisine better than that at Encantado's signature restaurant, Terra, directed by Executive Chef Charles Dale, the locals have other favorites, too, with most serving New Mexican-style comfort food. A great example is The Shed, just off the Plaza, where they pour their famous red and green chile sauces with a generous hand and all the flavors of Pueblo, Spanish and Mexican cuisine come together more than satisfactorily.

After dinner, spend the evening at the world-famous Santa Fe Opera, housed in a beautiful, open-air theater. The season is brief, just July through August, making



Zaplin Lampert Gallery contains valued works by such legends as Thomas Moran, Albert Bierstadt and George Catlin, while the Morning Star Gallery is a great place to discover unique items relevant to Native American history, such as an exquisitely beaded woman's dress, loom-beaded charm bags, coiled baskets and bowls, and soft wool blankets made from naturally dyed, handspun yarns.

But Santa Fe is also a place for art that is fresh and modern. In the Railyard District, located a little west of downtown, fans of contemporary art will find some fascinating spaces, including SITE Santa Fe, which showcases video installations, sculptures, films, digital art among other mediums; LewAllen Galleries, which presents

property in the state, Encantado offers travelers spacious casitas with terrific views of the Santa Fe National Forest and all the way to Los Alamos. The rooms are filled with thoughtful amenities, such as heated bathroom floors, and the staff and service are impeccable; a small fleet of Mercedes-Benz vehicles are even available for guest use. The fitness center, yoga/movement studio, outdoor pool and first-class spa provide vacationers with a number of ways to recharge in style. Combining a moisturizing mud wrap with a relaxing hot stone massage, the spa's signature Mountain Spirit Purification treatment is the best way to restore tired minds and bodies in time for another day of rollicking around town.

And while it could be an impossible task

every performance just that much more spectacular and special. And opera-goers never forget the thrill of watching the singers perform famous arias against the backdrop of a vivid New Mexico sunset.

Those in the know say September is the best month to visit Santa Fe, when the weather's ideal and the summer crowds have gone, but the city has plenty going on year-round, including farmers' markets, fine arts events and a continuous stream of colorful festivals. Regardless of when travelers venture into Santa Fe or why they choose to come, there has never been a better time to experience all the city has to offer. As the writer D.H. Lawrence said of New Mexico, "Touch the country and you will never be the same again."