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LETTER FROM THE *EDITOR IN CHIEF*

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Hello there,

Let's walk the streets of Memphis, Enjoy the autumn nights with star-filled skies out west in Wyoming, and dream up our next set of trips. We want you to travel with us and like us, so we invite you to interact with our new Travel Like This section in the magazine and then hop online and get your hands on some of the perks we enjoy the most.

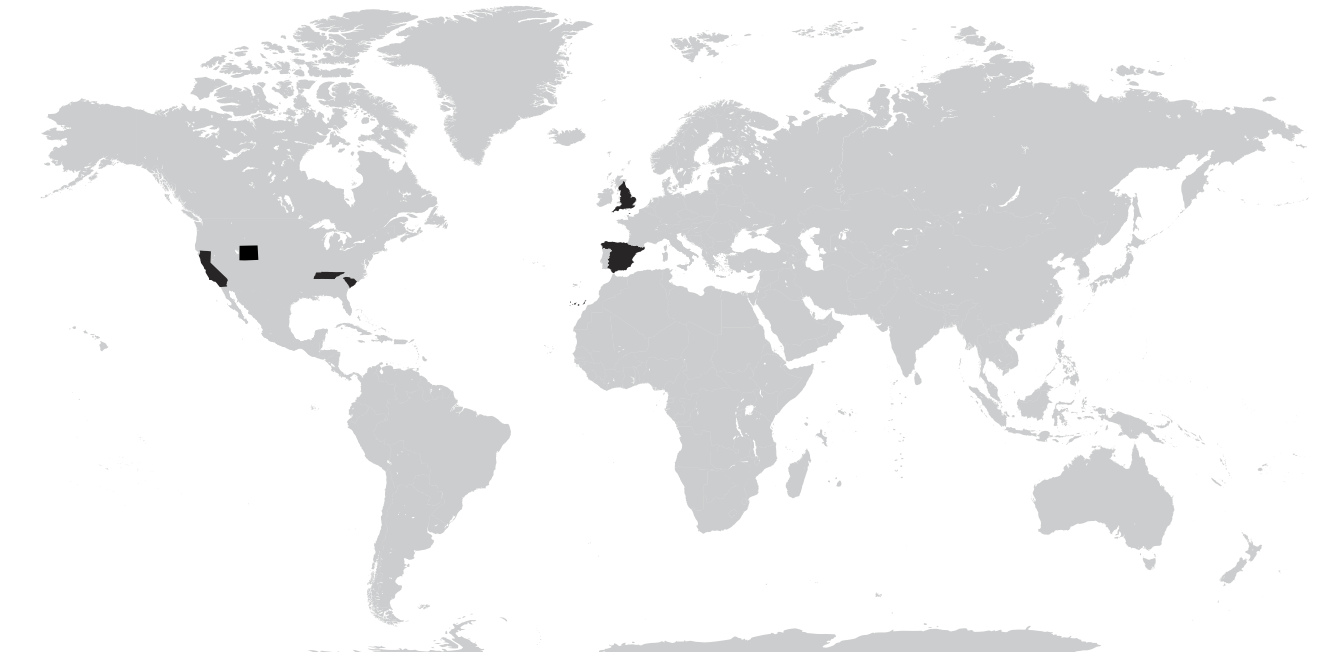
Also big news about our new podcast the Travel Instigator, found where you listen to your current podcasts. This is the podcast that takes you with us, without kidnapping you. We bring our travel stories and some funny behind the scenes happenings to life in this fresh new take on telling travel tales.

Yours,

Peta

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THE SWANK TEAM



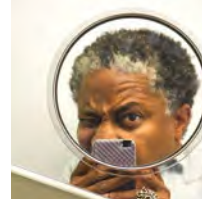
ALEXANDRA MAE
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

When you look up "wanderlust" in the dictionary odds are that a picture of me is in the definition.



AMY SEDEÑO
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

As a self-proclaimed @hotelista I do quite a bit of traveling, and from holding a tarantula in an ancient site in Guatemala to drinking high tea in Dubai, and petting grey whales in Baja, you bet I've got stories to tell.



ANDREW INNERARITY
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

I prefer to let the images do the talking.



ANN MARIE SCHEIDLER
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

"Thailand was the trip of a lifetime for this Chicago girl...a sensory overload in the best of ways. The people, the food, the landscape: all unforgettable."



AVA ROSALES
FEATURES EDITOR

Wherever the destination may be, it's the villa life for me.



DYLAN BENOIT
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

I'm a chef with Champagne taste and a beer budget, but always seem to find myself surrounded by the most amazing people in the most amazing places. From eating termites in the Honduran jungle to learning how to make dim sum in Hong Kong, for me treasure is in the story.



JEFFREY SOBEL
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

All I need is a book, a bourbon and a boat to a new destination - I'll be just fine.



SERGIO OLIVARES
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

When I am not at a music concert, you might catch me hunting down new and exciting roads to drive on the weekends. "I live my life a quarter mile at a time." - Dom Toretto.



SOPHIE IBBOTSON
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

I'm an entrepreneur, writer, and lover of wild places. I like nothing more than exploring new destinations with extraordinary landscapes, rich cultures, and preferably a sprinkling of remarkable wildlife, too. A jaw droppingly beautiful place to stay is the icing on the cake.





Southern Swank

Story By Jeff Sobel

@
STEVEN
TELLER
ARTS
...

Blues, brews and style all come together in the swankiest southern town this side of the Mississippi. While the hordes of tourists might flock to Nashville, its sister city of Memphis has been quietly undergoing a renaissance, cooking up the real taste of Americana that few remaining towns can offer.

I arrived at the Hyatt Centric which just celebrated its grand opening in April 2021, garnering a number of records including the first and only hotel not only on Memphis' famed Beale Street, but also right on the riverfront. With 227 guest rooms and suites, it's the perfect blend of musical history and modern amenities. Far from a typical cookie-cutter chain, the local owners have crafted this resort into a unique and swanky oasis with all the exquisite touches and musically-inspired decor that can only be found in Memphis.

To paraphrase a Johnny Cash lyric, it was Memphis in mid-July, I'd just hit town and my throat was dry, time to stop and have myself a brew. After freshening up in my expansive, modern guest room featuring a center staged glass shower and gorgeous river views, I step right onto downtown Beale Street. I pass several historical structures with steel beams holding up the facades as Beale is one of the most protected streets in the country, adding to the movie set-like feel.

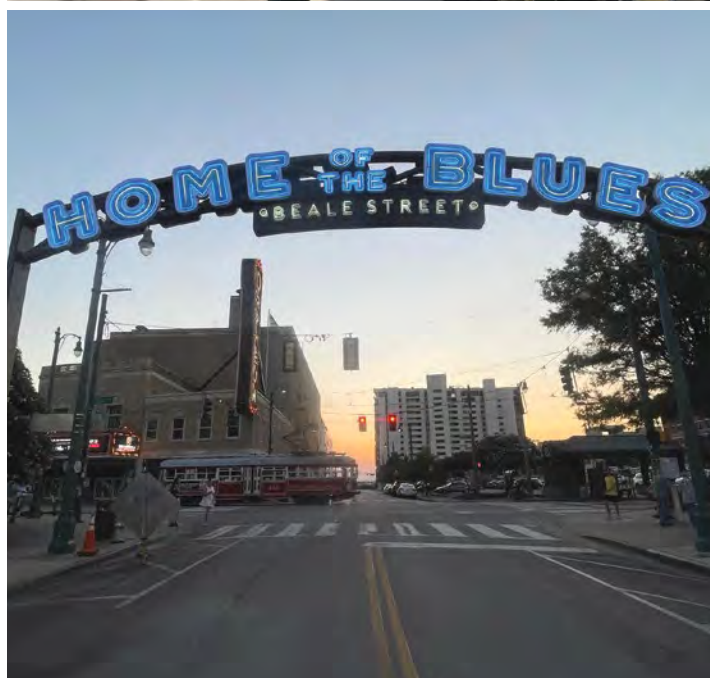




I met the Hyatt Centric's director of events, Nick Janysek, for lunch at Dyers, a place I imagine B.B. King might have stepped into late one night, or early one morning. Saying it's a southern diner doesn't do it justice. More history than most, the secret cooking grease used in the kitchen dates back over a century - you read that right. Anyone who's had a blues type of night on the town knows that a good hangover can only be cured by a greasy burger, and there's no better place than Dyers. I haven't had a night that requires a fried Twinkie, but I do have a local Fireside beer that cools me right off.

As the afternoon peaks, I take advantage of the great weather and return to the Hyatt's resort-style pool that offers cabanas and an expansive deck for live entertainment. I set up camp half in the water and half in the sun, marveling at how the Centric managed to meld South Beach with Southern Hospitality.

Once the sun sets over the river, I tour the Hyatt's conference center meeting space which demonstrates how different the Centric brand is than most hotels, much more in tune with the local community. The converted historic building with exposed brick walls, wooden beams and massive factory windows overlooking the river



make it seem more like a country farmhouse than a typical ballroom. I meet with the general manager, Sarah Titus, for drinks at their CIMAS lounge where more touches of brass lighting and the stone bar resonate with the hotel's overall vibe of history meets modernity. On this sultry summer evening, I dive into a grapefruit-infused gin cocktail that's as refreshing as it is delicious. I hear tales of the owner's family history and the long path to build this dream hotel, going so far as to commission the Memphis Metal Museum to repurpose metal and materials from the historic 1879 William C. Ellis and Sons Ironworks and Machine Shop Building.

After happy hour, I head out passing the historic red brick downtown buildings where signs of a city re-emerging from 2020 can be seen everywhere. I pass the infamous street from the film, 'The Firm', and a plaque noting author John Grisham's ties to this splendid southern city. With the apropos Centric hotel so close to everything, I soon traipse through what seems like a time portal to emerge at Rendezvous, a BBQ institution for over 75 years. The servers don't work here for months or years, but decades, and it's a tribute to the establishment and the servers' dedication that everyone is back and better than ever.

The racks of smoked pork ribs with dry-rub spices are a must, and the tender brisket rivals my Texas friends' recipe, if I may say so; not to mention the pecan pie tart appetizer, because why not? Washed down with a local Wiseacre brew, my spiced and messy fingers stain the sides of the beer bottle. Getting messy is the cost of admission and I'm happy to pay.



After a restful night's sleep in the plush guest bed, I head downstairs for anything but a traditional hotel breakfast. With a mix of southern specials through a Latin American lens, I daresay the Hyatt's CIMAS restaurant rivals any local spot in town. Far from the typical hotel fare, the modern cuisine sporting river views gets me ready for the day with a carnitas egg breakfast hash that I never knew I needed in my life.

While aqua blue and sunflower yellow trolley cars cruise along the historic streets, I decide to instead ride off my breakfast by utilizing one of the city's many electric bike stations. With Memphis now listed as one of the most bike-friendly cities in the nation, I'm able to travel down a scenic path before reaching the massive bridge hovering over the Mississippi River. With the breeze cooling the summer heat, I make it halfway across the bridge where I keep one foot in Tennessee and step my other into Arkansas.

After taking in the sweeping views of the city, I head to Sun Studio, noted as the 'Birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll. I met with Milton Howery from Memphis Tourism who gave me an inside look at the recording studio that launched the careers of countless stars including B.B. King, Johnny Cash, and an 18-year-old delivery truck driver who popped in one day on his lunch break, Elvis Presley. This is where I learn all about Memphis' musical history and how this unassuming recording studio produced so many hits, and even is still in use today.





A short stroll from the studio lies a hip-hop inspired pizza joint, Slim & Husky's, which can best be described as a party in itself with stunning murals, tunes and of course artisan flatbreads and cinnamon rolls as colorful as the artwork. As with so many Memphis restaurants, the ingredients are locally-sourced and the design so unique, where essentially an assembly line offers endless cheesy choices. I go with 'Nothing but a V thing', a fully vegan pizza to mix up my BBQ-fueled trip. Just as tasty if not more, the vegan mozzarella and even vegan pepperoni is a perfect blend for an afternoon treat, followed by the 'Halle Berry' lemon blueberry cinnamon roll that's unlike any I've ever tasted.

Wanting to explore a little further from downtown I grab a ride to up-and-coming North Memphis, past lush green forests and even a few horses before reaching the new Grind City Brewery, a massive modern complex sitting beside the river with a priceless view of downtown. I speak with the owners who picked this location and spent years revitalizing the old factory to help the spread change in the area. I tour the facility where they brew not only different varieties of beer, but have also expanded into their own hard seltzers.

With a flight tasting in the bright and open taproom overlooking the expansive outdoor green space, I try a delicious Viva Honey Seltzer followed by the 'Not Your Kids Chocolate Milk' stout that garners some looks on this hot summer day, but cools me off just the same.

Back downtown, the sun sets and Beale Street springs to life as partygoers stroll the pedestrian street past guitar sculptures and even a courtyard bar with pet goats. Only in Memphis can I ascend a secret fire escape just above the hopping B.B. King's Blues Club to find a fine dining restaurant, Itta Bena, serving up contemporary Southern cuisine with a Delta influence. I meet with Milton and Nick in the literally 'Blues' inspired dining room where blue tinted windows cast sapphire light throughout the swanky southern spot, topping off the speakeasy hideaway feel.

From the flash-fried crab stuffed avocado to Abita BBQ shrimp appetizers I wonder if I'll make it to the main course. Reinforcements arrive as my old fashioned comes smoked, not stirred, inside what looks like a magician's glass box, the perfect pairing for my center cut filet mignon. Great food and lots of laughs, Memphis truly has it all.





In the morning I'm surprisingly hungry again, but not for long, because a short walk from the Hyatt lies Sugar Grits, a local breakfast eatery where I sample a biscuit board followed by Charleston cheddar yellow grits with andouille sausage - I've never felt more southern. I meet up with Milton again from Memphis Tourism who shares his experiences growing up in this unique city, along with tales of its past. With so much rich culture it's important to also recognize the full history of both Memphis and America, with no starker landmark than my next stop, the National Civil Rights Museum located at the Lorraine Motel where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Naming it one of the top sites to visit in town is an understatement, as it's one of the most impressive, poignant and touching museums I've ever experienced. Combining both the actual motel facade with a heart-wrenching museum, visitors step through an immersive and informative

experience with exhibits, films, artwork, historical artifacts that detail the history from slavery through Jim Crow, the Civil Rights movement and much more.

Back in the summer sun I cool off with a Bushwacker milkshake (essentially a mudslide) at the Green Beetle, the oldest bar in town, before diving headfirst into a greasy heaven at Gus's World Famous Hot & Spicy Fried Chicken restaurant. I go with a three piece dark chicken with mac & cheese, fried green tomatoes, fried pickle spears and fried okra - I'm fried! It's no frills, all taste, and I couldn't be happier.

My stomach is stuffed just in time as I cross the street for a tour of the Old Dominick Distillery, taking an inside look at the full process from massive bubbling vats to bottling, then back to the brand new rich bar for a tasting of vodka, gin and of course, Tennessee Whiskey.



In the center of downtown lies the perfect summer venue, an outdoor amphitheater at Handy Park, which makes sense as the entire city's spirit teems with music. As a way to welcome back live music, the city is hosting an eleven-week free summer concert series, and thanks to Milton and his Memphis Tourism team I get a front row seat to Memphis soul artist, the Nick Black Band. Perfectly shaded and with a cool breeze, the crowd dances in delight as we all take in the tunes and for a moment forget that it's our first concert in over a year. A frozen Wet Willie's daiquiri drips condensation down my hand, the smell of a nearby BBQ smoker wafts over the crowd as I watch a band member's purple-painted trombone ignite the party.

After the concert, I return to the Hyatt Centric and change into cocktail attire for dinner at CIMAS and watch the priceless view of the sun setting over the mighty Mississippi. I meet executive chef Keith Potter

and his team who have infused their passion with free reign to offer unpretentious yet exquisite variety, including a refreshing summer hydro Bibb salad with charred avocado, pork belly 'al pastor' tostada, followed by the Mishima wagyu bavette topped with chimichurri and corn chow chow.

An elevator from CIMAS takes guests straight up to Beck & Call, the first and only riverfront rooftop bar in the city. Since I was too satisfied with the extravagant meal to try dessert, instead I indulge with a festive 'Biscotti' old fashioned as I watch the "M" Bridge Mighty Lights show over the river and reflect on my time in Memphis. I've seen so much and yet so little of this historic, musical, trendy town, wondering why I haven't been here sooner? Better late than never, and I'll certainly be back.

[SR](#)

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Giddy Up

The Tale Of A
Wyoming Guest Ranch



Story By Peta Phipps & David Blair

"The geysers, bubbling sulfur pools, rolling hills, wild life and wild tourists captured our attention along the way."

We took the long way in getting here. Heading out west from the East Coast is always an adventure and a journey to be savored, so we took the scenic route.

Flying into Billings Montana late at night and staying in a tiny bed-and-breakfast before hitting the road to cross Yellowstone National Park the next day was the perfect respite after flying commercial all day.

The geysers, bubbling sulfur pools, rolling hills, wildlife and wild tourists captured our attention along the way. As far as the eye could see this spectacular spectacle of a park offered jaw dropping views. If it weren't a lush mountainside, there was a babbling brook that cut through a field of wildflowers that somehow peacefully coexisted with a steaming pool that appeared to have popped up out of nowhere. Old Faithful was getting old because its spurting exhibit of prowess was lacking, in my opinion. Having sat out in the blazing sun in anticipation, I found the geysers display a tad disappointing. However the surrounding terrain offered crystal clear pools and a kaleidoscope of watercolors as a backdrop, formed by sulfur springs and other tiny bubblers nearby.

No time was wasted. This was a trip, an adventure, and a journey that we wanted to immerse ourselves in. The journey through Yellowstone was a memorable one but the anticipation of where we were headed kept this road trip moving. No time to dawdle because what lay ahead was potentially more intriguing and even more entertaining than what lies behind in the park.

We were on our way to Red Reflet Guest Ranch. The name alone is intriguing as reflet is French for reflect. We couldn't wait to discover why it was named in such an untraditionally western name. This is the wild Wild West after all and names mean a lot out in these parts. It didn't take very long upon arrival to surmise why the name was what it was. Upon approach, the red rocks that formed the mountain range which served as the backdrop for this resort spoke volumes. The red was everywhere. When I say everywhere, I mean it. We were about to find out just how far that red dirt was willing to travel.



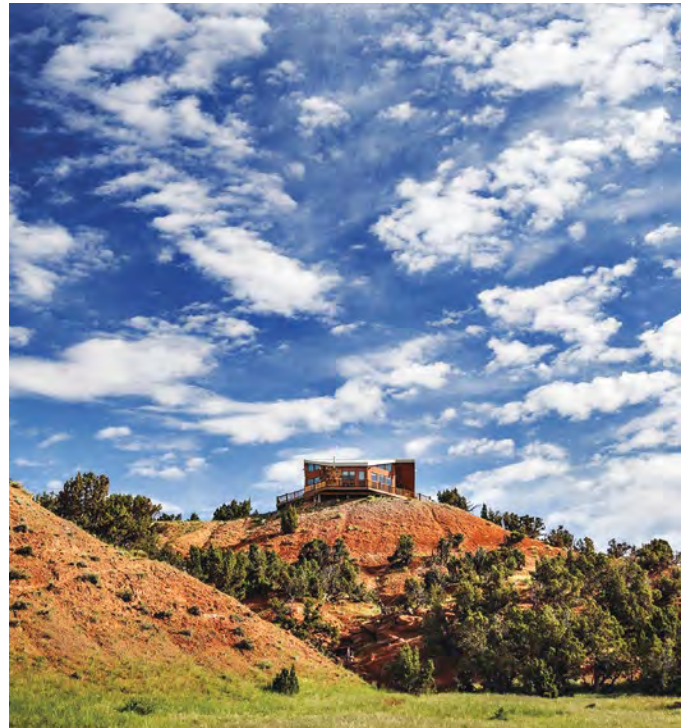




As we checked in at the main lodge we were escorted to our chalet and what would be our transportation for the remainder of our stay. Our chalet sat overlooking the ridge that framed the canyon that climbed upward to a table top plateaued red mountain. Our floor to ceiling windows showcased everything. It was about time that we dropped our bags and hopped on the two awaiting ATVs. It was time to explore!

As I said, we flew commercial, but quite a few of the guests who were there during our stay flew into the resort's private airport. What a spectacular landing that must be to glide in and taxi down the runway with these glorious mountains on either side of your wingtip. From everything we heard from those guests, it was a magical experience. The guest ranch is magical for everyone though as you're about to see through our words which truly do not do justice to this gorgeous 6,600 acre ranch.

The tagline says they are exclusively inclusive and uniquely uncommon; we can attest to that. As we hopped on our ATVs and headed out to explore some of the acres we looked at each other in awe. Stretched out beside us, behind us, beneath us, as we descended our perch atop the mountain from our chalet, were virgin green pastures on one side, red rocks on another in a dusty valley on yet another side. Within our sites, we knew we had a veritable adventure playground at our feet. We came as a couple but the resort is one of the best in Wyoming for families. It allows guests to schedule as many activities as they like. We chose to start off simply exploring on our ATVs, in an attempt to figure out what we should do first.





As we had just arrived, I was too timid to hop on and have my first time experience on a dirtbike. I was timid because who knows how that would've ended up. As we drove past the stables with all the dappled horses brown and even one that had to be in his stable during the daylight hours because he was easily sunburnt, that's right a horse who basically reminded me of Mr. Ed, as he gazed out at us from his stable accommodations. He became one of our favorites, actually. Although we couldn't ride him in the hundred degree, sunny daylight we decided to hop on other horses and off of our cycles and get out and see some really great terrain. There are ample choices that range from hiking to fishing, mountain biking, rifle shooting, handgun shooting, rock climbing and a natural water park for swimming and some swinging off ropes, as a daredevil does. Speaking of daredevils, we threw our names on the list to go and zip line across the ranch.

As we took the rim ride, as it is called, we got to thinking that we were sort of happy it wasn't winter because we could imagine tobogganing and sledding down the slopes of these red rock ranges. It was a harrowing enough experience for us to ride on the rim atop one of these gorgeous red plateaus. The cracked slate under the hooves of the horses let us know that we were not necessarily on terra firma the entire ride, but we never felt afraid, for these sure footed creatures carried us with gentle grace as we looked down hundreds of feet to the canyon below. The silence and serenity made it easy to be at one with nature, only the sound of the occasional neighing from the horse and the crackle of that slate broke the thick silence that was among us. Captivated by our surroundings, we were speechless for all the right reasons.



Hopping off of our horses and back onto our ATVs to head up to the chalet, we decided that the day's ride was worth discussing while sitting on our wraparound terrace because we simply couldn't bring ourselves to interrupt each other's thoughts while on the ride along the rim of the mountain. Cowboy boots up against the railing gazing out at the red rocks, sipping on a glass of wine, we decided to do nothing before getting ready for dinner with the other guests and our inspiring host, Laurence. Doing nothing here also seems like an activity outside of all those that they offer because as we sat staring off into what we thought was a still life Vista, we looked to our right and saw a family of deer making their way down to the green valley below. At every turn and every glance we were able to see nature unfolding as daylight drifted into sunset, washing the red rocks with a new subtle light.

That golden hour glow was our cue to head to dinner. We took the car down in the evenings as dust was not a welcome accessory to our evening attire. When we say inclusive, we mean it. All of our food, beverages and activities were included (besides a nominal fee for a fishing license had we chosen to partake in fly fishing). Dinner was always an enjoyable delight. We ate outside, chatting with the owner and her guests, sipping on wine and watching the red rock mountains fade to black. Luckily for us our stay was over a few moonless nights that set the inky black sky a light with stars instead of moonlight, allowing us to see

clearly the Milky Way and other constellations. The views at night rival those of the day and even from my bed looking beyond our toes, we could see the night sky dotted with stars that twinkled, as though they were sending us off to slumber and wishing us a good night.

It really is engaging. Being at the ranch at one with nature, being a part of the crew, if only for a few days and nights, the experience is authentic and as hands-on as one would like it to be. Speaking of hands on, our zip lining experience required us to use our hand to press down on the brake in order to stop. Talk about taking your life into your own hands. This was an adrenaline rush like no other. We soared above the swimming hole, saw others hiking up the side of a mountain, and dirt bikes being returned to the shed. Being up that high and taking things in from yet another vantage point gave us a sense of invincibility. On the final run of the zip line, we were so emboldened that we dusted off the red sandy bits that we picked up along our joyride high above the ranch and decided to give dirt bike riding a try! My partner rides motorcycles quite a bit so he had little trepidation taking on the loose earth, as he took off over the horizon and climbed up the side of a hill. I, on the other hand, took a minute to learn about gears and clutches and then I was off! Fairly proud of myself for staying on the bike as I sped up and down on the mostly flat, sandy parts of the valley.





What a trip! Our days here were numbered and as time drew nearer to departure, we soaked in our hot tub on the last night; contemplating the stars and chatting about taking a final horseback ride to a hidden waterfall that we had heard so much about. Seems surprising in what is now a very arid state, that for millions of years was underwater and 300 million years ago, in the Carboniferous age, Wyoming would have been an island off of the west coast of North America, if you can imagine that. So on our way to the waterfall, it should have been no surprise to us that we stopped to pick up fossilized tentacles from a squid-like cephalopod. At first these pieces of prehistoric history eluded our eyes. They are the same color as the dusty ground we were trotting upon. But once our guide, the general manager of the resort, Penny Ready "Penn" hopped out of her saddle and picked up two to show us, our eyes acclimated and we found a few more of these bullet-shaped, dart-like treasures. What a treat that was. Driving to the guest ranch we had seen the signs along the road about the age of the rocky terrain we were driving through, but being able to dismount our horses to actually touch these extinct treasures brought home the fact that this trip indeed was a privilege not many get to experience. Awash with emotion from that encounter, we rode along over a hill to be surprised, yet again, by the sight of the waterfall which appeared out of a barren landscape. We tied our horses to a tree and sat on the banks of the river created by the cascade and took it all in for a few minutes, as the horses rested. The ride back was mostly quiet, as we reflected on our final moments at Red Reflet. Taking it all in before we hit the road once again.

This is how to do the Wild West in style, even if you have to fly commercial!

www.red-reflet-ranch.net

SR

SR



The background is a dense, overlapping collage of various international airport arrival and departure stamps. The stamps are in red ink and include details such as country names (USA, Germany, Belgium, France, Austria, etc.), dates, times, and signatures. Some stamps are clearly legible, while others are partially obscured or faded. The overall effect is a sense of global travel and movement.

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Travel like this happens once in a lifetime for some people. We want you to enjoy traveling like this, as much as we do, and as much as you can. That's why we've partnered with a few select hotels and resorts (and even a dude ranch) to offer you great rates, amenities, and some special perks.

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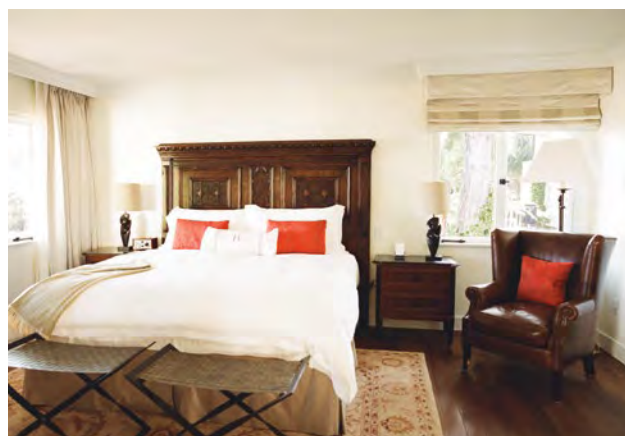
El Encanto

Santa Barbara, California

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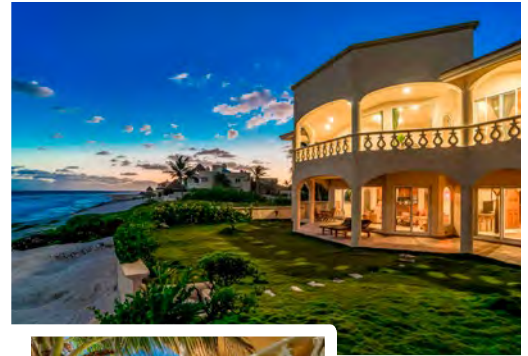
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For reservations, please visit www.Turtleheartvilla.com



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TULUM BEACH, MEXICO

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