

TRAVEL + LEISURE

OCTOBER 2002

The
World's
Best
Spas

SPECIAL
STYLE ISSUE

Tuscany
Paris

London

Bangkok

Berlin

Arizona

New Zealand

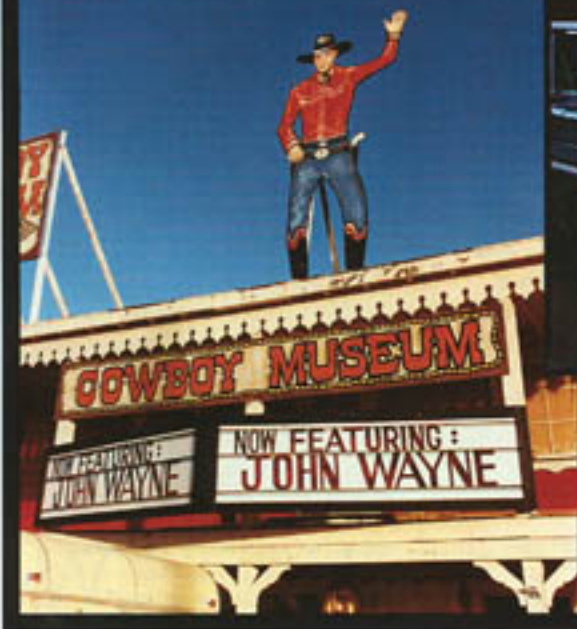
Istanbul

Tokyo

PLUS Diane and Tatiana von Furstenberg: Insider's Guide to L.A.

ISSN 1040-2391
OCTOBER 2002





Welcome to Bisbee: the town's main street. Left: C'mon in to the Cowboy Museum, Tombstone. Below: Awaiting delivery off Route 80, Benson.



The Not So Old West

Hey, cowboy: beyond the ghost towns and desert roads of Arizona, CATHERINE O'NEAL finds an unexpected oasis of vintage trailers, fusion cuisine, and bohemian style

Months before I drove to Bisbee, Arizona, I'd heard a lot about the old copper-mining town turned 21st-century hideaway for artists, eccentrics, and freewheeling entrepreneurs. Like an unspoiled desert version of Key West, Bisbee was supposedly filled with vigorously restored 19th-century buildings and antiques shops. Nestled in the Mule Mountains just seven miles from the Mexican wilderness, it was a sanctuary for the edgy and the adventurous.

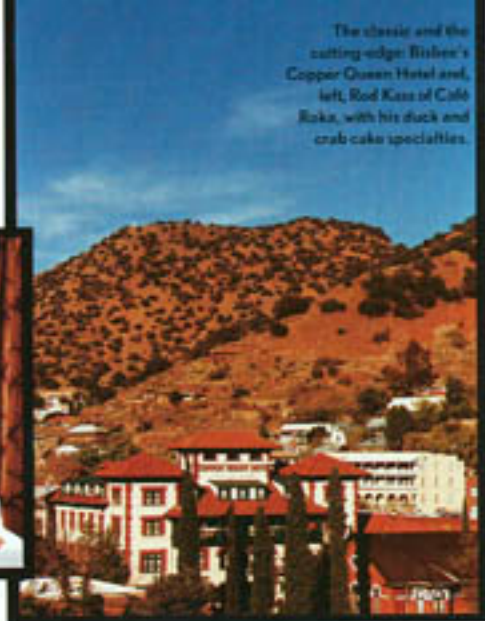
When I told my father I was headed to this Western bohemia, he assured me I was mistaken. A Florida cattleman who can lasso a calf faster than my cell phone flickers on, my father has

a picture of the desert that consists of outlaws and woolly bordellos. His Bisbee adventurers tote rifles, not art canvases. To prove it, he sent me leather-bound books on the frontier, with exuberant notations about the saloons, gold mines, and gunslings I'd encounter. What made my trip to Arizona especially appealing to him was that I'd pass through Tombstone, whose motto—The Town Too Tough to Die—summed up his idea of the West precisely.

The day before I left, he gave me one of his typical directives: "You'd better take your gun." I reminded him of the time he tried to outdraw James Arness on *Gunslinger* (my dad stood inches from the TV screen, waiting with a Colt .22 Peacemaker in his holster) and ended up shooting himself in the leg. "For the record, I was faster than he was," he muttered. »

I didn't pack a pistol, but I did take my favorite Agnès B. capris. In Tucson, I picked up a rental car and headed east on Interstate 10, with the caramel-colored Rincon Mountains to the north. The hot sun made the road ahead seem to ripple as I began the 90-mile drive to Bisbee. Catching Route 80, I cruised through the near-ghost towns of Benson and St. David, where donkeys grazed among the soap-tree yuccas. After 14 solitary miles, I came upon the real—and very unreal—town of Tombstone. A huge headache with the words HISTORY, HEALTH, AND HOSPITALITY welcomed me to the place where Doc Holliday, Wyatt Earp, and Earp's brothers Virgil and Morgan gunned down Ike Clanton and the McLaury brothers at the O.K. Corral. Today's corral is a bit less dramatic, not much more than a diorama with Setson-hamed mannequins.

Determined to come away with something authentic, I stopped at the Bird Cage Theatre, highlighted in one of my father's books with a poster of "human fly" dance girls suspended by shoe clamps from the ceiling. The 1880s building has the town's last remaining original bar, an exquisitely carved cherrywood piece with a French cut-glass mirror. The cowboy at the bar invited me to roam the theater, now a museum hidden behind a black partition. I wondered if the Bird, once an ornate playhouse for gambling, dancing, and prostitution, would be just another touristy gift shop festooned with a few historic relics. But when I pulled back the curtain, what I found was a perfectly preserved past: red and green glass chandeliers, gambling tables with ivory poker chips, a juke-



The classic and the cutting-edge: Bisbee's Copper Queen Hotel and, left, Rod Kass of Café Roka, with his duck and crab cake specialties.

box that took only silver dollars. It was as if nothing had been touched for 120 years.

Anxious to tell my father about the Bird, I called him on my cell phone as I left Tombstone, pressing south on Route 80 toward Bisbee. Less than a minute into the conversation, I lost my signal—and didn't get it back until I returned to Tucson three days later.

I passed through the Mule Mountain Tunnel and emerged to see the tiny town of Bisbee, population 6,000, with its crooked, skinny streets, copper roofs, and adobe buildings. Around every corner, stone steps snaked up to hillside bungalows (there's an annual Bisbee Stair Climb the third week of October, in which locals race up and down the town's 1,043 steps). Nothing was straight or flat. Even the buildings—many packed with colorful galleries, cafés, and artists' lofts—tilted with the terrain. »

ITINERARY



Day 1 92 miles from Tucson. Head east on I-10 to Route 80; then veer southeast to Tombstone (70 miles). Continue on Route 80 southeast, passing through the Mule Pass Tunnel to Bisbee (22 miles).

Day 2 Explore Bisbee and the surrounding Mule Mountains.

Day 3 233 miles from Bisbee. Take Route 80 northwest then cut west on Route 90 through Sierra Vista and Fort Huachuca, turning north on Route 83 to Sonoita, then head south on Route 82 through Patagonia and Coronado National Forest to the border town of Nogales (157 miles). Drive a few miles north on I-19 to Route 289, and go west to Arivaca (54 miles). At Arivaca, head northwest on Arivaca Road to Route 286, then south to Rancho de la Osa (22 miles), two miles north of Sasabe.

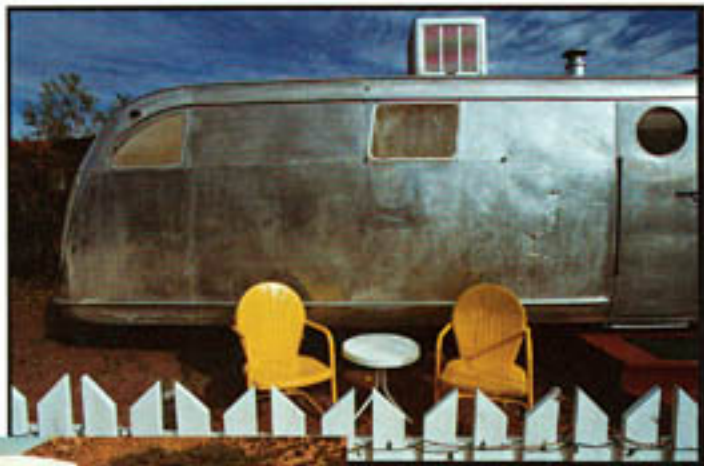
Day 4 72 miles from Rancho. Take Route 286 north to Arivaca Road, which wends east to I-19 and Arivaca Junction. Return north on I-19 to Tucson.

Founded in 1886, Bisbee blossomed into a culture capital of 20,000 after billions of pounds of copper were discovered in the early 1900's. Bisbee-ites combined their passion for revelry (47 saloons and brothels lined an alley called Brewery Gulch) with a zeal for architecture, filling the town with Romanesque mansions and Queen Anne bungalows. After the mines finally dried up in the early 1970's, the town's elite abandoned the beautiful old buildings. Word of the cheap architectural and cultural gold mine spread from Berkeley to Woodstock, and hippies began arriving in their VW vans, buying up property and infusing Bisbee with their own brand of art, attitude, and eclecticism.

I got a glimpse of that offbeat style when I drove by a hula-themed Buick sedan studded with plastic pineapples and painted with palm trees. Later, I learned that the car belonged to gouache artist Kathleen Pearson, who started Bisbee's "art-car movement" 12 years ago. Pearson's whimsical rides have been displayed in museums (including the Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore) and have appeared in an HBO documentary.

Taking the "cool ride" concept a bit further are antiques dealers Ed Smith and Rita Personett; in 1994, they turned seven vintage travel trailers and a 1947 Chris-Craft yacht into the Shady Dell lodge, 1 1/4 miles south of Bisbee. Against a backdrop of burly brown buttes, the trailers lined up neatly, silver bullets beneath a hot, still sun. A 1948 Yellow Cab was parked under a mulberry tree, and an iron bed decorated with plastic flowers—the latest folk-art creation by one of the managers—rested on a patch of grass. At the edge of it all was Doc's Diner, which served biscuits and gravy to locals seated on sparkly pink stools. From Doc's tiny takeout window, Bobby Vinton's "Roses Are Red" drifted through the desert air. It was a scene straight out of a David Lynch movie.

I had my pick of trailers—a tough choice, since each was glamorously nostalgic, down to the flamingo-crowned martini shakers and rose-colored percolators. Ultimately, I fell for a 1951 Spartan Royal Mansion with a breakfast booth and grape-colored sofa. Settling down on it, I spotted a 1957 leatherette Setchell Carson TV with a VCR and a selection of old movies. I chose my dad's favorite, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Bells*, and watched the opening scene—John Wayne being carried away inside a coffin—as the sun flashed off headstones in the cemetery outside my window. Perhaps my vision of the Wild West wasn't so different from my father's: here I was, in my chic travel trailer built when he was a teenager, and here was his



Hot wheels. Above: A unit at the Shady Dell Vintage Trailer Park. Left: Kathleen Pearson, one of Bisbee's "art car" artists, with an automotive creation.

hero, John Wayne, now chasing bad guys across my living room screen.

That night, I wished my father were with me when I drove into town for dinner at the High Desert Inn. He would have loved the building—the 1918 county jail that still has prisoners' names etched on the back walls. What I loved was the campy elegance, the white linen tablecloths, the former cell doors turned into wine racks, and the large, Art Deco-influenced acrylic paintings. But what we would have both loved was the rich and flavorful food: hearty Black Angus filet mignon and Hungarian chicken paprikash.

Bisbee's bohemian scene came alive the next day on Main Street. Over a glass of pulpy peach lemonade at Café Cornucopia, Bisbee's best lunch hangout, I watched residents stroll by in their easy, desert-sun style: ruffled skirts, turquoise chokers, rectangular copper glasses. Across from the café, I found a small Africanized-killer-bee honey shop called Made in Bisbee. Reed Booth invited me to taste his sweets (the Killer Bee Radical Raspberry Honey Mustard had just taken a silver medal in Napa Valley's national mustard competition). In the mid-nineties, he became Bisbee's official "beehive guy" when millions of killer bees migrated up from Mexico. He now answers emergency calls in his beemobile and makes silky honey butters, mustards, and mead (honey wine) in his clifftop laboratory.

I asked Booth why he became a killer-bee guy. "There aren't many jobs in Bisbee," he explained. "To live here, you've got to find your own cool niche." One of Booth's best friends, known as Electric Dave, found his in a defunct shopping center on the edge of town. There he single-handedly runs his own micro-brewery; Dave's Electric Beer Lager and OK Ale are so popular that he can't keep up with orders, which come from as far as Phoenix.

Later that day, I got back on the road and drove west through the Huachuca Mountains to the border town of Nogales. I'd made an appointment at Holler & Saunders, a private gallery housed in a palatial 30-room hacienda. It's the only way to see Ed Holler and Sam Saunders's extensive collection of art and antiques; though the owners prefer to be discreet about prices and celebrity patrons, they did allow that the 40-million-year-old fossils in the lobby of the Phoenician, in Scottsdale, came from their collection.

It was early evening by the time I reached Rancho de la Osa, a 16-room guest ranch in Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, 60 miles west of Nogales. In 1996, art collectors Richard and Veronica Schultz bought the dilapidated 18th-century hacienda and adobe outbuildings and transformed them with vibrant tones of pomegranate and persimmon, adding international furni-

ture: Mexican Mission benches, African mud-cloth cushions. Today, the Rancho is just as fashionable as when John Wayne and Margaret Mitchell vacationed there a half-century ago.

At the dinner bell, guests gathered in the dining room for arugula salad with sweet chipotle vinaigrette and warm garlic custard with salsa fresca. The owner and chef, Veronica, draws from local farmers to create Southwestern fusion menus that change daily. After dinner, many of us retreated to a stone-walled terrace, where we sipped a 1997 Edna Valley Chardonnay from Richard's cellar. I listened to other guests make early-morning horseback-riding plans.

My morning ride, however, was 70 miles in the car back to Tucson. As I drove north on Route 286, cows grazed inches from the road, reminding me of my father's own herds. His West was still here, alive and well. +

THE FACTS

WHERE TO STAY
Shady Dell Vintage Trailer Park
 DOUBLES FROM \$35
 1000GLAS RD., BISBEE
 520/432-3567
www.freshydel.com

Rancho de la Osa
 DOUBLES FROM \$120,
 INCLUDING MEALS
 1616 HARKER T. RTE. 286, SASABE
 800/673-6240
www.ranchodelaosa.com

WHERE TO EAT
Note: Many restaurants are closed on Monday and/or Tuesday, so call ahead.

Café Roka
 Contemporary Italian dishes are served in a 1907 building with embossed tin ceilings and maple floors.
 DINNER FOR TWO \$55
 35 MAIN ST., BISBEE, 520/432-5153

Duf's Diner
 LUNCH FOR TWO \$15
 1000GLAS RD., BISBEE
 520/432-5885

High Desert Inn
 DINNER FOR TWO \$60
 8 MACO RD., BISBEE, 800/291-0510 OR 520/432-1442

Café Cornucopia
 LUNCH FOR TWO \$14
 14 MAIN ST., BISBEE, 520/432-4820

SHOPPING
Pentimento
 Here you'll find estate-sale antiques, such as 19th-century Red Wing urns and Victorian-era bamboo music cabinets.
 69 MAIN ST., BISBEE, 520/432-2752

Made in Bisbee
 15 MAIN ST., BISBEE, 520/432-5573
www.killerbeegy.com

Holler & Saunders
 BY APPOINTMENT ONLY
 NOGALLES, 520/287-5153 OR
 520/287-4583

MUSEUMS AND SIGHTS
Cowboy Museum
 Come for a kitschy collection of Wild West movie memorabilia

and a John Wayne display.
 OPEN 10-5 DAILY
 SUMNER AND FULTON STS.
 TOMBSTONE, 520/457-3794

Bird Cage Theatre
 OPEN DAILY 8-6
 SIXTH AND ALLEN STS.
 TOMBSTONE, 520/457-3421

Copper Queen Hotel
 The 1902 Mediterranean-style mansion was long Bisbee's high-society spot. Step out on the brick veranda for evening drinks and watch the sun go down.
 11 HOWELL AVE., BISBEE
 800/247-5829 OR 520/432-2216
www.copperqueen.com



CARIBBEAN CRUISES



> LENGTHS

7 days
 10 days
 14 days or more

> REGIONS

Eastern Caribbean
 Western Caribbean
 Southern Caribbean

> PORTS OF DEPARTURE

FL Lauderdale
 Port Canaveral
 Tampa

> YEAR-ROUND SAILINGS

> PRICES

7 days from \$699
 10 days from \$1199
 14+ days from \$1399

Based on each cruise from 2007. Price includes homeroom, departure.

Slip away into the Caribbean on board some of the world's highest-rated ships. Stretch out in a spacious stateroom or on your veranda. Find your own spot of sand on Half Moon Cay, our private island paradise.

And choose from a wide variety of itineraries as seductive as the twilight's balmy breeze. Only from Holland America, consistently rated among the world's best cruise lines by readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel + Leisure*.



Holland America

CALL YOUR TRAVEL AGENT OR
 1-877-SAIL HALL EXT 712 WWW.HOLLANDAMERICA.COM