

Explore Autumn in Arizona

David M. Brown
Photos by David Montgomery

Every October, when you begin missing the aromas of fall and the leaves' crackling, don't go home to New England, Montana or Oregon, however charismatic they are this time of year.

Instead, stay home in Arizona, itself a harvest of colors and textures. Three locations in different areas of the state are among many where you and your family can enjoy the season's symphony.

In Greer, 4 hours north in the White Mountains, Molly Butler Lodge & Cabins features three queen-bed lodge rooms and 50-plus private cabin rentals for two to 18. Molly's has also been recognized as one of Arizona's top restaurants. Since February 2010, Executive Chef Ruben Ingoyen has introduced dishes while continuing traditions such as the award-winning Prime Rib Chili recipe, from the White House Cookbook, which Herbert Hoover gifted pioneer owner Molly Butler.

Molly Butler, born Mary Ann Wiltbank in 1877, hosted ranchers, woodcutters, fishermen, outdoorsmen and other visitors such as Teddy Roosevelt, John Wayne and Zane Grey. Three structures — The Square House, Long House and Log House (now The Bluebird Library) — remain from the original home.

When she died in 1964, the telegram read: "Aunt Molly... gone. We loved her. Greer will never be the same." Today, Greer remains delightfully the same every year because of Molly Butler Lodge; don't miss a visit.

In Oak Creek Canyon, just north of downtown Sedona, Creekside Inn features Oak Creek running through its three wooded acres. The property offers six contemporary-style rooms, including four suites.

Furnished in Victorian antiques, Creekside has amenities such as jetted tubs, HD TVs and Blu-Ray players with Wi-Fi connections. Concierge Service provides information on activities, tours, shopping and site-seeing. Just outside, Oak Creek is spectacular in the fall, an autumnal palette of oranges, reds, yellows and browns.

Owners and innkeepers since 2001, Mark and Tammy Charlesworth have stayed in bed-and-breakfasts in Switzerland, France, Germany, Holland, Mexico, Asia, the Caribbean and the U.K. As a result, their hosting is always from their visitors' perspective.

For breakfast, Tammy prepares a three-course breakfast every morning served on English china, and for dinner, Monday through Thursday, you may order a romantic three-course dinner with personal service in your room or at the Gazebo.

Southern Arizona, especially Santa Cruz County, is also a worthy fall-color destination.



If you're leaving from the Phoenix area, consider taking the old road to Tucson through Florence Junction and stop at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Superior, whose elevation and riparian locations provide unsurpassed seasonal display. Overlooking Tucson, 9,000-plus-foot Mount Lemmon also shows splendidly in fall livery.

About 35 miles south of Tucson, the 500-acre Tubac Golf Resort & Spa occupies the historic 1789 Otero Ranch. The Spanish founded the area as a presidio,

or fort, in 1775. In the background are the Santa Rita and Tumacácori mountains; 20 minutes south is Nogales, Mexico.

Opened in 1959 and completely renovated in 2008, the 98-room resort features golf, tennis, dining, a spa and year-round swimming and relaxation amid historic structures and lush natural vegetation and gardens. The 27-hole championship course embraces the countryside, spanning both sides of the Santa Cruz River.

Each of the 52 Haciendas include a

state-of-the-art sound system, flat screen TV, jet tub, walk-in shower, sunken living room area, fireplace and patio. In addition there are 20 Casitas and 27 Posadas, and the Otero Suite in the historic Otero Hacienda has a private patio with golf course and mountain views.

For dining, both the Southwest cuisine Stables Ranch Grille and the Apache Room & Patio, just off the Ninth hole, are open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. ❏

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