

DESTINATION TRAVEL & EVENTS



▼ The **Cameron** Trading Post celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2016. A swayback suspension bridge was erected over the Little Colorado River in 1911, creating the first easy access over the gorge. Soon after, brothers Hubert and CD Richardson established the Cameron Trading Post, visited at that time only by the Navajo and Hopi locals to barter their wool, blankets and livestock for dry goods. A trip to the post to trade could take days by horse-drawn wagon. Guests were always treated as family, fed and housed by the trading post during their stay. Understanding local dialects and customs, the brothers were trusted by the local Native American people in matters concerning confusing new American legal and social systems. As roads improved and interest in the area grew, the Trading Post's convenience to the Grand Canyon and other attractions made it popular for other travelers. Cameron Trading Post's restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, with American, Mexican and local cuisines. Its motel has spectacular views right alongside the Little Colorado River Gorge, with beautiful sunsets toward the Grand Canyon. The head of the operation is descended from the original founders, delivering the same philosophies of hospitality and respect today. The people who work here have done so for generations. Travel is easier today—about an hour north of Flagstaff on US 89.

▼ Cliff Castle Casino Hotel, on the Yavapai-Apache Nation in **Camp Verde**, held a groundbreaking in January for its six-story hotel expansion. Speakers at the celebration included Cliff Castle Casino Hotel General Manager Mary Kettering and Yavapai-Apache Nation Chairman Thomas Beauty, who shared full details of the expansion, renovations and their economic impact to the greater Verde Valley region.

▼ The 26th El Tour de Mesa, Saturday, April 2, 2016, is a 72-mile ride starting and ending in downtown **Mesa**, traveling through the beautiful Tonto National Forest and Salt River Canyon as it circumnavigates Red Mountain. There are also a 28-

mile route and Fun Rides of 11 and 16 miles. El Tour is partnering for the fifth year with CycloMesa, a three-day bicycling celebration (April 1-3) that includes the Two-wheel Jones Bicycles 2016 El Tour Criterium State Championship (short-course races on city streets), the Arizona Bicycling Summit, a beer garden, a food truck alley, and live music. El Tour is dedicated to Olympic Silver Medalist Nelson Vails, who will be honored at the Thursday, March 31 Dedication Dinner at the Mesa Convention Center.

▼ On November 19, 2016—the Saturday before Thanksgiving—El Tour de **Tucson** is a fun adventure ride attracting over 9,000 cyclists of all ages, novice through professional, from the US and worldwide. Cyclists can choose main event distances of 104, 75, 55, 40 or 25 miles, a Fun Ride



Cliff Castle Casino Hotel expansion rendering

of 11 or 5 miles, or a fun 1/4-mile activity course. Main routes feature vistas of Tucson's majestic saguaro desert, against a backdrop of four surrounding mountain ranges, three rising above 9,000 feet ele-



El Tour de Mesa
El Tour de Tucson

vation. Course profiles range from flat to rolling or moderately hilly. The new 25-mile route is mostly flat, a great family affair or perfect for beginners. Two sandy river crossings greet 104-mile riders, with



Sedona, Arizona

one for 75-milers. All routes have aid stations with water and snacks, about 7-10 miles apart, police support at intersections and plenty of morale-boosting volunteers and spectators. The Fun Ride runs on the Santa Cruz River multi-use path.

▼ **Verde Valley** communities Sedona, Cottonwood, Camp Verde, Clarkdale and Jerome participated in a visitor survey project commissioned by the Arizona Office of Tourism to analyze tourism trends. New research covered the fiscal year from September 2014 to August 2015. A total of 2,406 qualitative and quantitative surveys covered three main areas of a visitor profile—characteristics, satisfaction and demographics. Compared with a FY2006 survey, it also showed differences over the nine years between. Key finds:

- ~ 63 percent of visitors were from out of state, 8.5 percent international.
- ~ 53 percent averaged 8.3 prior visits, and 47 percent were first-time visitors.
- ~ 42 percent said the primary purpose of the visit was sightseeing, while 19 percent came for outdoor recreation.
- ~ 44 percent said their decision to visit was influenced by family or friends, while 13 percent consulted the Internet. Compared with data from the FY06 survey, the differences showed that:
- ~ Per-party per-day spending grew from \$423 to \$654 (avg) from 2007 to 2014.
- ~ Average party size grew from 2.6 persons in 2007 to 3.1 persons in 2014.
- ~ Visitors who identified this as the pri-

mary destination increased from 69 percent in 2007 to 72 percent in 2014. Visitors also gave a notably high satisfaction rating of 4.3 out of 5 to the region, which supports data that repeat visitors

are key to the area's tourism economy. In 2014, \$669 million in direct visitor spending produced a total economic impact of \$697 million, including \$240 million in labor income and \$104 million in federal, state and local taxes.

▼ Just two hours from Las Vegas and four hours from Phoenix, **Grand Canyon West** offers visitors a variety of outdoor and cultural experiences, including the Skywalk, Colorado River raft tours with Hualapai River Runners certified guides, helicopter tours and horseback riding. Lodging includes historic Hualapai Lodge on Route 66 and Hualapai Ranch, with rustic, western-themed cabins overlooking the Canyon Rim. All the Grand Canyon West tourism experiences pay homage to the culture



Hualapai River Runners
Walapai Experience
Grand Canyon

and history of the Hualapai Tribe, which owns and operates the Grand Canyon Resort Corporation for the benefit of tribal members and the surrounding economy. Hualapai River Runners and Grand Canyon West have unveiled a new tourism experience for 2016—The Walapai Experience, a guided two-day weekend tour of the Grand Canyon's West Rim that takes adventurers from the rapids of the Colorado River to an overnight encampment in Spencer Canyon, then into the sky by helicopter to tour the Grand Canyon's West Rim. Two-day Walapai Experience tours begin on March 5 and run every weekend, weather permitting, until October 30, 2016.

▼ The Hudson, one of **Sedona's** newest restaurants, opened in late 2015 under the guidance of Executive Chef Jeff Storcz at Hillside Sedona. The chef's culinary pedigree stems from decades of work including as executive chef at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale and executive sous chef at the Phoenix Ritz-Carlton. The Hudson



The Hudson,
Sedona

menu includes an array of beverages, including local beer and wine, and craft cocktails. Culinary offerings include fresh

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dishes such as bruschetta, charcuteries and salads, plus crowd favorites with a unique New American flair.

▼ Wynn **Las Vegas** has announced the development of Wynn Plaza, a 75,518-



square-foot luxury retail complex in the high traffic area bordering Las Vegas Boulevard. Debuting in fall 2017, the complex will augment the existing luxury retail collection at Wynn Las Vegas and Encore, which includes Chanel, Dior, Loro Piana, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Moncler, Givenchy, Hermès and Alexander McQueen, bringing their total retail to over 173,500 sq.ft.

▼ Snowbird and Alta offer excellent skiing just 30 minutes from Salt Lake City. At the southeast corner of the Salt Lake Valley, Little Cottonwood Canyon in **Utah** is only “little” in that it’s a bit shorter than its big brother to the north. In fact, Little Cottonwood’s Alta and Snowbird have 40 percent more vertical descent (5,260’) than Brighton and Solitude (3,800’), the two resorts in Big Cottonwood Canyon, and that drop is faster and more challenging in the narrower canyon. Besides a prohibition of snowboarding, Alta’s bumper-sticker catchphrase—“Alta is for skiers”—also hints at their traditional culture that prioritizes skiing over fancy restaurants and 5-star hotels. Like Zürich or Alagna, people go there to ski. Fancy that. Alta does have good beginner runs, but first-timers aren’t their primary demographic, if you catch their

(snow)drift. Expect deep powder, state-of-the-art facilities and the longest ski season in Utah. For more information, visit DiscoverAlta.com.

▼ Papillon Group’s **Grand Canyon Sc**

Meat and the Colorado River—the heart of the Grand Canyon. The plane lands at Bar 10 Ranch, where guests experience a guided ATV trek through Whitmore Canyon and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, to reach an exclusive vantage point overlooking Grand Canyon National Park. The tour concludes with a homemade Dutch oven barbecue lunch.

▼ **Las Vegas** calls to mind images of glittering lights, luxurious resorts and jaw-dropping attractions. But soon, nestled between Monte Carlo Resort and Casino and New York-New York Hotel & Casino will be The Park, an oasis bringing a microcosm of the surrounding desert landscape to a pathway accessing new T-Mobile Arena. Opening in April, The Park will provide a respite from the hustle and bustle of The Strip, allowing guests to relax and unwind while socializing with friends, enjoying delicious food and beverage from charming culinary destinations, or just strolling through the space to take in the sights of The Strip’s newest architectural marvel.

▼ Live Nation and SLS Las Vegas are opening the newest live music venue in **Las Vegas**, The Foundry at SLS Las Vegas. After complex renovation, The Foundry replaces LiFE Nightclub as an 1,800-capacity live music venue with state-of-the-art production and design. The venue’s partnership with Live Nation promises an exciting roster of entertainment, including X Ambassadors on March 26 during their recently announced national tour. ■



Alta, Utah

Photo: DiscoverAlta.com