

Bathing Arizona *Pools, parties and paintings just outside Phoenix (p.84)*



Travel

Scottsdale, AZ

Drink up and calm down in this Phoenix 'burb.

By Chris Page

Somewhere along the line, upscale Scottsdale became known less for its golf courses and hokey Western art than as the place where celebrities flock to party (Christina Aguilera), get arrested (Mike Tyson) or check into rehab (Kate Moss)—all while basking in gorgeous desert weather.

Not that you have to be a celeb or strung out to visit the town that blends Beverly Hills ritziness and Las Vegas nightlife with its own Southwestern allure. And the next few months are the best time of year to make the trip: By June, thermometers hit triple digits and locals start sticking to their leather car seats in rather unattractive ways.

Accommodations

A half hour from the Phoenix airport, the town boasts dozens of elegant spa resorts, but the kickiest digs are at the just-opened **Mondrian Hotel Scottsdale**

Scottsdale (7353 E Indian School Rd; 480-308-1100, mondriancottscsdale.com), located in downtown's Old Town. Designed with a Garden of Eden theme, from serpents and trees in the lobby and apples in the guest suites to the inky-black SkyBar where, theoretically, angels come to fall, the hotel has a fun vibe, and an ultra-attentive staff. For those whose tastes run more midcentury modern, try the **Hotel Valley Ho** (6850 E Main St; 480-248-2000, hotelvalleyho.com), whose recent \$80 million renovation freshened up the funky 1950s aesthetic.

Dining

Those allergic to cowboy kitsch might feel a bit itchy at **Roaring Fork** (4800 N Scottsdale Rd, 480-947-0795), but the beef tenderloin with lip-smackin' green-chili mac and cheese justifies the visit. Plus, the Fork has one of the best bars in Arizona. Fishy folks, meanwhile, can ponder a mystery at posh but cozy Japanese eatery

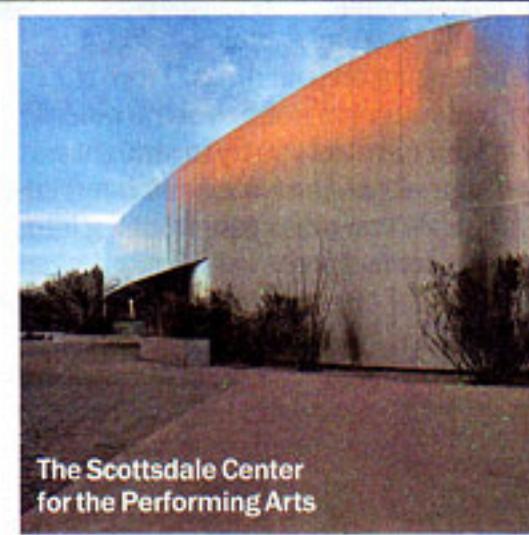


Mondrian Hotel Scottsdale

Stingray Sushi (4302 N Scottsdale Rd, 480-941-4460): namely, how does a desert joint manage such fresh sashimi? Assuage late-night hunger (closing time is 2am) with a pesto Alfredo pizza at **Mickey's Hangover** (4312 N Brown Ave, 480-425-0111). And shake residual grogginess with a latte and wild-mushroom omelette at **The Breakfast Club** (4400 N Scottsdale Rd, 480-222-2582).

Drinking and nightlife

We'd spend at least one night hanging by the pool at the Mondrian, sipping refreshingly sweet lychee-and-ginger martinis, but downtown Scottsdale's nightlife is buzzing every night of the week. Start off with margaritas on the patio at **Salty Senorita** (3636 N Scottsdale Rd, 480-946-7258) before heading to **e4** (4282 N Drinkwater Blvd, 480-970-3325), where the rooms



The Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts

THE TAB

Airfare	\$430
Hotel	500
Car rental (with gas)	110
Meals (and drinks)	300

TOTAL COST \$1,340

(two nights, two people)

 Nonstop flights are available through JetBlue, Continental, Delta and US Airways.

TRAVEL TIME 6hrs

Sherman. Architecture buffs should take a tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's **Taliesin West** (Cactus Rd at Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd, 480-860-2700), the campus he built at the foothills of the McDowell Mountains in 1937.

Outdoors

Hike **Camelback Mountain** (N Invergordon Rd at Camelback Rd, phoenix.gov/parks/hikecmbl.html), a 1,200-foot climb that affords not only a butt-kicking workout but one of the best views of the Phoenix valley.

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On alone

Onetime Army medic and real-estate agent Sarah McLean—who stumbled onto the teachings of Deepak Chopra and joined his alternative healing practice—leads **Primordial Sound Meditation**, a transcendental technique using silent mantras, all over Arizona (meditateinarizona.com). The intimate sessions (\$95–\$325, 2.5–6 hours) offer newcomers—and even curious skeptics—the opportunity to climb deeper into the quiet of the mind. In a spa-centric town like Scottsdale, it's like a deep-tissue massage for the busy brain. "My goal in life," McLean says, "is to make sure everyone gets a chance to meditate at least once."

are themed after the four elements. Clubbers can find more than a dozen stylish hot spots in the neighborhood around swanky **Six** (7316 E Stetson Dr, 480-663-6620).

Culture

The Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts (7380 E 2nd St; 480-994-2787, scottsdaleperformingarts.org) hosts Tim Robbins's the Actor's Gang troupe and its modern staging of George Orwell's 1984 on March 23 and 24, while **The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art** (7374 E 2nd St; 480-874-4666, smoca.org) is staging "Celebrity" (through April 29), which juxtaposes the often wretched artwork made by stars such as Frank Sinatra and Janis Joplin with celeb-based work by artists like Cindy