

# ECHO MAGAZINE

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## SUMMER STAYCATIONS

THE SAGUARO AND OTHER VALLEY HOTELS OFFER HOT WEATHER GETAWAYS

**PLUS:** A WEEKEND AT THE BILTMORE

## SOAP STORY

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL STORYLINE REFLECTS ACTRESS' LIFE

## PRIDE TURNABOUT

DATES FOR 2013 FESTIVAL AND PARADE MOVED UP BY TWO WEEKS



# PLAY WHERE YOU LIVE

Tourism amenities make Phoenix the ideal vacation location — even for the locals

BY LIZ MASSEY

The pool at the Saguaro Hotel.  
Photo courtesy of Julie de Vivre Hotels

**P**HOENIX HAS A REPUTATION as a popular travel destination, which can make it a fun place to live, even in the depths of the blast-furnace-like summers.

“With so many four and five star resorts, the summer season is the perfect time to enjoy the pool, spa, golf and culinary amenities,” said Doug MacKenzie, director of communications for the Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau.

According to the Visitors Bureau website, VisitPhoenix.com, the Valley is a powerhouse in terms of travel amenities. It boasts 60,000 guest rooms at nearly 500 hotels and 40 resort properties. There are six lakes within a 75-minute drive of the city.

And although tourism has taken a hit recently, partially from the impact of the economic downturn and partially from reaction to the passage of SB 1070, it's still one of Arizona's economic mainstays, pouring \$17.7 billion in revenues into the state in 2010.

But not all of Arizona's considerable tourism activity is generated by national or international visitors. Research sponsored by the Arizona Office of Tourism indicates that local visitors account for as much as 25 percent of the impact that travel and tourism has on the state.

Jeff Slade, president/owner of Detours of Arizona, a company that hosts small-group tours throughout the Southwest, said that Phoenix resorts and attractions are popular enough to draw visitors year-round, even during the stifling heat of June, July and August.

“We're busy year-round,” he said. “Phoenix resorts offer some amazing deals in the summer. We're not as busy now as we are in March or October, but [Phoenix's attractions] do keep us busy.”

Angela Hughey, who operates the One Community business networking organization, said that LGBT staycationers are a key market for her business members in the hospitality industry. She said she encourages members of her organization to connect with gay individuals, couples and families by offering special rates or activities tailored to their interests.

Local LGBT people “are a whole segment of budget travelers in our community that One Community members in the hospitality industry can reach,” she said. “Staycation dollars are incredibly important ... The business of Phoenix is dependent on consumer engagement year round.”

**ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES,** we've crafted four travel plans — for urban hipsters, female couples, LGBT families with younger children, and those who want to take trips to locations within a day's drive of Phoenix.

These travel plans, both within the Valley of the Sun and locations throughout the state, can help you get to know the place where you live a little better — and in some cases, will direct your dollars to a LGBT-owned or LGBT-friendly business.

So get out there and plan your next getaway! Or, as Hughey put it, “Play where you live. Go exploring in your own backyard — it's an amazing backyard!”

# STAYCATIONS: HIPSTERS



Hotel's midcentury design takes visitors back to the past

**T**HE PERFECT GETAWAY begins by leaving behind all traces of your crazy life in 2012, and the Saguaro Hotel in Old Town Scottsdale is the time machine that will take you back to a groovier time.

The Joie de Vivre hotel group has transformed the property, originally built in the 1960s, into a tribute to Southwestern style.

The Saguaro's exterior glows with eye-popping hues of pink, orange, yellow and purple; the contrasting blocks of color continue in the lobby, and are complemented by retro-chic décor that includes old cameras and vintage copies of *Arizona Highways* magazine.

At the Saguaro, you can relax in one of two outdoor pools, or take in the eye candy from your room's balcony or patio. The hotel's Disitro restaurant specializes in small plates of Mexican street food. Or whet your whistle at Old Town Whiskey. The Saguaro's on-site eateries are managed by "Iron Chef" Jose Garces.

The pools feature free water aerobics classes at 11 a.m. Saturdays. DJ Sean Watson is poolside on Sundays, spinning tunes and offering appearances by special guests, great food and cocktails.

This summer, the Saguaro is offering discounted rates ranging from \$79 for a weekday to \$109 for a weekend night.