

# MEN'S JOURNAL

MJ APPROVED: TRAVEL

## The Painted Desert Respite



### The Saguardo, Scottsdale

With its sandstone buildings and the rocky Sonoran desert surrounding it, Scottsdale, Arizona isn't exactly known for eye-popping color. That's why the Saguardo hotel, a 1960s motel renovated with vivid hues inspired by indigenous flora – not to mention mod design elements like solid-colored walls, light woods, and black-and-white photos of local cacti – makes a strong first impression. The 5.5.-acre property, however, offers more than good looks (as well as firm-but-comfy beds in spacious rooms with flatscreen TVs and iPod docks). It's located in the city's historic "old town" district and literally next door to the performing arts center, but inside the gates a party is going on. At least that's one way to describe the lively, expertly DJ-ed pool scene, and you'll want a room with a view of one of the two palm-lined swimming holes. 'Iron Chef' Jose Garces helms the in-house restaurant, Distrito, and he's brought a Mexico City-style cuisine, full of bright flavors and fresh ingredients, to a spot that could have easily settled for another "New American eatery."

We frequented the area to tour Frank Lloyd Wright's home and school Taliesin West, which is a short drive away, as well as to swing our drivers on some of the finest fairways in the southwest, especially at the Troon North Golf Club, which sprawls around natural ravines and boulders. Back at the hotel, which draws a hip, youthful adult crowd and may offer you a room with a cow's skull on a side table, we enjoyed a powerful glass of rye at Garces' bar Old Town Whiskey, which specializes in Americana-style spirits. Some of us let the desert relax our spirits – others may head to the on-site spa, where local ingredients are made into treatment salves. But we fell into sync with the newly revived Scottsdale as envisioned by the Saguardo: young, bold, active, and yet still stress-free. [Rooms from \$189, [jdvhotels.com](http://jdvhotels.com)]

– Adam Baer