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ENCHANTING SEDONA

By Lisa Codianne Fowler

Your Truth may not lie in crystals, astrology or past life regression, purveyors of which you'll find in abundance in the quirky, New Age capital of Sedona, Arizona. But you are guaranteed to experience an overwhelming, maybe even mystical sense of exhilaration in the presence of Sedona's ubiquitous red rock mountains and cobalt blue sky. Not only is this area nature's visual

masterpiece, but the rock formations are said to emanate an energy—call it psychic, spiritual or scientific—that makes it what thousands believe to be one of the planet's most intense "power spots."

The basic theory is that the simultaneous presence of certain minerals, lava and fault lines converge to create natural earth energy fields, or vortices. In Sedona, the high content of iron oxide that gives these mountainous rocks their warm red color also creates a natural magnet and conductor of energy, drawing more lightning strikes than anywhere else in the world. Lightning fuses sandstone and silicone into quartz, which amplifies the energy, resulting in varying effects on the human nervous system and providing "opportunities for human transformation." The Native Americans call it sacred earth, and New Agers call it a center for psychic activity. I call it simply breathtaking.

My vantage point was Enchantment Resort, where my husband and I stayed during our brief pilgrimage here. Set on 70 acres and nestled deep within the majestic, crimson walls of Boynton Canyon, Enchantment provided the quintessential setting from which to explore the area's natural, cultural, and artistic charms.

The resort offers awe-inspiring views of the legendary red rocks, instilling at once a sense of wonder and serenity. Numerous hiking trails lead through forests blanketed with wildflowers to Native American ruins and caves. There is also a unique healing spa and fitness facility, award-winning cuisine, golf, tennis, croquet, four swimming pools and all the amenities you would expect to find at a top-rated, full-service, luxury resort. What you won't find anywhere else is Uqualla, Enchantment's Native American Cultural Ambassador.



A Havasupai Indian, born and raised in the Grand Canyon, Uqualla provides guests with a deeper understanding of the ancestral peoples whose voices once reverberated through Boynton

Canyon. This warm, colorful character is quite formidable in appearance, especially when donned in full ceremonial garb of tunic, moccasin leggings, lioncloth, jewelry and eagle feathers.



We had the honor of having Uqualla accompany us on our helicopter and hiking tour of the Grand Canyon, one of many excursions available through the resort. A two and a half hour scenic drive from Enchantment led us to Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters, where we embarked on what was unequivocally a life highlight.

It's what a bird must feel, gliding, soaring, swooping, except we sat comfortably in cushy seats wearing BOSE headsets, listening to music choreographed to the flight and occasional narration by our pilot. The views were a singularly thrilling sensation...the Colorado River flowed restlessly below us between dramatic rock formations and clusters of verdant forests.



The helicopter landed at the bottom of the canyon, in rustic Havasupai Village, Uqualla's homeland. We took an exhilarating hike down a long, somewhat arduous trail (Indian-guided horseback tours are also available) to another of nature's magnificent displays...Havasupai Falls. Powerful gushes of baby blue/green water poured down from the skyscraping cliffs. We rested on the rocks below, just above the sinuous stream created by the great waterfall. The resort provided a gourmet picnic lunch, which we feasted on as we watched a show like none other.



Enchantment offers a number of other must-do adventures, among them, an array of red rock backcountry jeep tours. We journeyed across the rugged terrain through scenic canyons, juniper forests and prickly pear cactus, on a wild, rough and tumble ride. Not for the faint of heart, but definitely for seekers of nature, heritage and spirituality, this excursion was as inspiring as it was exciting.

Red Rock Jeep Tours provides a variety of themed tours...we found The Vortex Tour most intriguing. It explores the mystery of the four energy spots in Sedona, where thousands of people have supposedly had incredible metaphysical experiences, including enhanced psychic abilities, visions, weight loss and healing. The Airport Mesa vortex is a mountainous rock that offers a panoramic vista of the town and surrounding scenery *and* "facilitates certain human experience," depending on the individual. Mine was a profound sense of well being. Vortex-invoked? Maybe. Beauty-inspired? Definitely.

As for more worldly pleasures, visit the little known ghost town of Jerome, hillside home to all those hippies you haven't heard from since the 60's, and a delightfully quirky collection of galleries, shops and cafés.

Power shoppers with taste will love Sedona, with its dozens of fine art galleries, elegant boutiques and restaurants. Stroll Tlaquepaque; a charming Mexican-style shopping plaza inspired by an actual Guadalajara village. Across from Tlaquepaque is the new Center for the New Age, where, if you're so inclined, you can have an artist paint a portrait of your Spirit Guide, have your aura photographed, regress to your past life, or simply browse the books, crystals and aroma therapy products available en masse.

All of the businesses in town conform to a building design code that includes a specified height and palette of colors, keeping natural beauty in the forefront and enhancing the town's quaint, Southwestern ambience.



Enchantment Resort also blends surreptitiously with its natural red rock environs. Bordered by the Secret Mountain Wilderness and the Coconino National Forest, our sights and senses were awakened by nature at every turn. When we visited Enchantment's spa, we chose to have our massages outside in the gazebo, amidst fragrant pine and juniper trees overlooking the dramatic canyon walls. Joanne Rivera gave my husband an invigorating Swedish massage, while Mary Meyer cleansed the toxins from my body via a soothing lymphatic treatment.

There are many types of body enhancing therapies—and venues—to choose from. Specially trained and licensed therapists proffer everything from facials to body wraps, from a soothing stones massage to “An Awakening,” a treatment facilitating the movement of Chi along the pathways of the body—resulting in the flow of peace, joy, and tranquility.

Enchantment currently offers “spa” or light cuisine in its Yavapai Restaurant, as well as an intriguing selection of distinctive American and Southwest specialties. Executive Chef Kevin Maguire uses local and regional herbs and spices to truly create “bright fusions of flavor.” Honored as one of America's Outstanding Chefs, his artistry combined with the restaurant's 180-degree views of Boynton Canyon make this experience hard to beat.



Accommodations range from studios to two-bedroom Haciendas with full kitchens. Our room was comfortably in-between and presented a stunning view of the legendary canyon. (Not all rooms have views, so be sure to request one.) Boynton is the largest and most powerful vortex in Sedona, having a balance of male/female and electromagnetic energies. It certainly cast its spell on us.

The ineffable beauty of the sun-drenched landscape, the resort's countless amenities, and gentle Uqualla's fascinating insights stir up a bewitching blend. And even in this mystical land of healers and soothsayers, it doesn't take a psychic to predict our return.

For more information, visit www.enchantmentresort.com or call 1-800-826-4180.