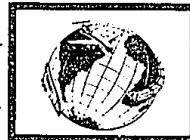


Travel Scene



10B**

O&E Thursday, April 12, 1990



crossroads

Iris
Jones

Mi Casa Su Casa

While stopping over in Phoenix on our way to Los Angeles, we organized a one night stay in a bed and breakfast. Our B&B was an adobe house connected to a complex of adobe buildings in Scottsdale, Ariz.

We found the B&B through Mi Casa Su Casa, an organization that rates and rents more than 100 bed and breakfast accommodations throughout Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. They can arrange a home stay, guest cottage, small inn or guest ranch for you.

"Mi casa su casa" is the historic Spanish western welcome: "My house is your house."

According to the literature distributed by Mi Casa Su Casa, their accommodations "have been granted a Gold Medallion certificate as they meet the highest industry standards as set by Bed and Breakfast Worldwide, a Trade Association of Reservations Services."

Each accommodation is listed in their small directory, but I didn't know enough about the Phoenix/Scottsdale/Tempe/Mesa area to choose, so I called and talked to Ruth Young, who established the service in 1980 after her son had experienced B&B's in Europe.

RUTH WAS a cheerful voice with lots of information about how to stay within half an hour of the airport; we were leaving early the next morning and didn't want to brave the Phoenix traffic on the way to our plane.

We went back and forth over the listings. Right location? Right kind of bed? Do we mind being with a dog? Do we smoke? Finally, we chose a private home on a Phoenix street for \$45.

"Now, what kind of work do you and your husband do," Ruth asked. She must have heard my hesitation, because she promptly added, "I'm not being nosy, we just like to introduce our guests to our hosts."

"My husband is a travel photographer," I said. "Oh, well, in that case you must go to another place. It has adobe buildings set in date palms, in fact it's on the grounds of an old date farm and its very photogenic."

That raised my rent to \$60, plus the \$5 surcharge for staying only one night in an accommodation, but I chose it anyway.

B&B check-in is not until late afternoon, so we saw the town before we turned into the date palms, walked through the gardens and knocked on a door in the adobe complex. Our hostess Pamela Hopkins greets her guests with wine and cheese before leading them to their room.

THE KING-SIZED bed was built atop a raised platform. Our private bathroom was a few feet down the hall. The hall was screened off from the living room for privacy.

We didn't have much time to enjoy Pam's hospitality but enough to get a taste of Arizona hospitality. Her house was our house. She has only the one room to rent, and her guests include both tourists and business travelers.

Mi Casa Su Casa is one of many B&B organizations in the U.S. Its directory includes more than city homes. You can go to Ajo, near the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument on the Mexican border; to the 1880's town of Bisbee; to Sedona in Arizona's Red Rock country; to Flagstaff near the Grand Canyon; to Page at Lake Powell which has 1900 miles of shoreline amid towering canyons.

Double occupancy rates range from \$35 to \$45 for a modest home and \$85 to \$125 for a luxury setting. Send \$5 for a directory to Mi Casa Su Casa, P.O. Box 950, Tempe, Ariz. 85280-0950. Or call (800) 458-0852.

The Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, Ariz., is a great stop to discover the 50 kinds of cactus plants that grow throughout the Southwest.



MICKY JONES

Phoenix offers an active stopover

By Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

How do you see Phoenix in a day when you've never been there before and you don't have a local friend as a guide?

That's the kind of problem faced regularly by business travelers with only a few hours to see their destination city before they fly home for another long week at the office.

We landed at Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix on Southwest Flight 500 from Detroit at 11:20 a.m. Tuesday, and flew out again on Flight 921 to Los Angeles at 8:20 a.m. Wednesday.

How can you do justice to the 10th largest metropolitan area in the United States in less than a day? You can't. But you can get a lot of travel value for your time if you land with a list of tourist literature and a plan.

I HAD never visited the Southwest desert country before, and I saw it for the first time from 30,000 feet in the air. It spread below the plane in a reddish haze. At first the desert

looked like it was dotted with lakes, but they were black shadows from the clouds hanging in the hot sun.

A highway and a river bed snaked side by side across the desert. What looked like flat land materialized into tabletop mesas. The land began to stubble like a 5 o'clock shadow. Trees. Snow-covered mountain trees. Red stone cliffs.

Then we came down through huge, whipped canyons, cumulous clouds into the Valley of the Sun.

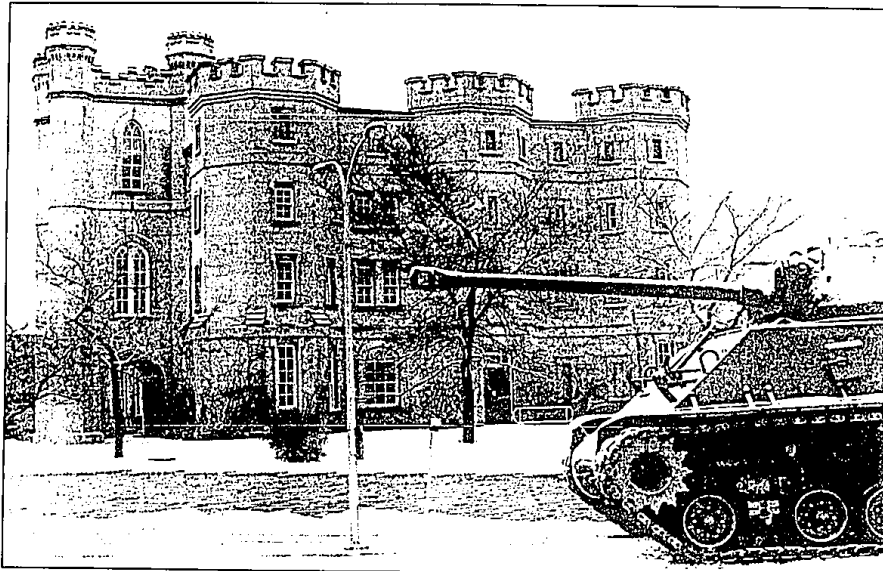
The Valley of the Sun is a chamber of commerce setting. It describes the huge flat desert terrace surrounded by mountains. Housing suburbs and recreational vehicle parks spread to the horizon, circling the mountains that erupt out of the valley, especially Camelback Mountains, the landmark of the Phoenix area.

The Hohokam Indians never saw the valley from airplane height. But if you visit the Pueblo Grande archeological site you will get a taste of how they lived in this hostile landscape, amid a system of mile-long canals, more than 1,000 years ago.

If that ancient culture interests you, plan a

Please turn to Page 9

THE LONDON



The Middlesex County Building, a castlelike fortress, is a great view from the London Regional Art Gallery.

WILLIAM SHEON

NEXT DOOR

By Mary Rogers
special writer

We wanted to get away from it all.

We wanted to find a place that would live up to the dullness that the not-quite-winter, not-quite-spring period is famous for. So we went to London for the weekend.

"We" means three couples; two from Birmingham, one from Farmington. We did some shopping, had afternoon tea and took a pleasant walk along the Thames at twilight. We saw a play, visited an art museum and a few galleries and found several good restaurants with French accents.

You understand, of course, that I'm talking about London, Ontario.

ONE OF London's many charms is that it's so accessible; an easy, two-hour drive from the Detroit area.

The first mile or two off Canada's 402 expressway is lined with familiar fast food outlets and motels so you may feel that you've never left home. But it's not long before the distinctive London look takes over.

London is the home of the University of Western Ontario, Labatt's Brewery, the Grand Theatre Company, a growing art community and the Guy Lombardo Museum. It's a blend of industrial business and a small town character; conservative and trendy, up-to-date and Victorian.

A good example is the Sheraton Armouries, a striking contemporary hotel incorporating a military armory of the late 1800s. There we saw a well-dressed woman, a real Queen Elizabeth look-alike, and a teenager in black tight with spiked purple hair, chatting away in the lobby.

Another charm is that London is so, well, Canadian. You know you're in another country in spite of all the similarities between Ontario towns and those in the Midwest.

LONDON is an easy town to get around in. Most of its cold weather attractions are in or near downtown, so we left our car in the hotel garage and walked everywhere through a soft, scenic snowfall.



WILLIAM SHEON

The Verandah Cafe is small and stylish. It fills up fast with visitors who make eating a major part of their get-away weekend.

Like many visitors, we planned our weekend around a play at the Grand Theatre; the provocative "The Road to Mecca" by the South African playwright, Athol Fugard.

Martha Henry is the Grand's artistic director. She comes from the Shakespearean Festival at nearby Stratford. The restored theater is mainly 1970s modern in style, but the ceiling still has its colorful murals and roccoco touches of turn-of-the-century decor.

"Girls In The Gang," a musical, will end the theater's current season in May. Call the Grand Theatre for ticket and schedule information at (800) 961-4918.

THE LONDON Regional Art Gallery, all glass and shiny steel tubing, with an aluminum rhinoceros sculpture and a couple of army tanks guarding the grounds, has a varied program of interesting exhibitions.

On the second floor is an attractive cafe called the

Gallery, with wonderful views of the Thames river and a fortress-like building across the street.

The food, provided by the Auberge du Petit Prince, a popular French restaurant, lives up to the setting. We had an ideal before-theater lunch: ginger carrot soup, pate and crusty bread and a flavorful green salad.

A GETAWAY weekend tends to revolve around meals, and London obliges with a variety of rewarding restaurants. Our two dinners, one at the Verandah, the other at Cafe Bruges, were delightful. Both are small, stylish places that fill up fast, so reservations are a good idea.

The Gallery Cafe in the London Regional Art Gallery, which is on the Thames and the Sheraton Armouries all serve a lavish Sunday brunch.

If you're in the mood for something different, there's the Laundry Cafe, 590 Oxford Street, offering 62 washers and dryers, a cafe menu, cocktails and big-screen TV.

And Mush McCann's Pub-Restaurant, 784 Dundas St., has entertainment that often includes wet T-shirt contests, Jell-O wrestling and table dancing.

IT'S FUN to browse in London shops. We found bargains in sweaters, mohair blankets and tweed caps.

Try Scott's on Dundas Street for Scottish woollens and the shops along Richmond Row, near the Grand Theatre, for trendy boutiques. The Covent Garden Market, off Market Lane, has Canadian crafts and foods.

Aside from the Sheraton Armouries hotel, there's the Idlewild Inn, the home of a 19th century London mayor, recently restored to polished splendor, with 20 rooms, antiques and up-to-date extras, like saunas and whirlpool baths. The downtown Journey's End hotel offers comfortable rooms at economical prices.

When we left, we were already planning another weekend visit for the summer. We want to see London's lovely parks and gardens, the 1834 Eldon House and the Museum of Indian Archaeology, and take in a London Tigers baseball game in Labatt Stadium.

And of course, there's always the Guy Lombardo Museum.

Detroit guidebook tells good and bad

AP — Almost a decade has passed since the Detroit area has had a guidebook published. Now a husband and wife team has put together a review of the city and surrounding suburbs, offering a taste of southeastern Michigan.

Don and Mary Hunt, both 45, who founded the Ann Arbor Observer monthly magazine in 1978, wrote the 341-page book, "Southeast Michigan."

The critical review touches on sites and restaurants from Flint to Monroe.

"Detroit is such a complex city. We really struggled . . . to get a balance," he said. "We found the more you know, the more interesting it is. We like Detroit," said Hunt. Hunt

and his wife began work on the book after selling the Observer in 1988.

The book gives readers hints of places waiting to be discovered, but also addresses racial segregation in the suburbs, Hunt said.

They characterize Mayor Coleman Young as having "grown more isolated and arrogant with time," and note how Dearborn Mayor Michael Guido once stumbled into a controversy involving his city's Arab-American population.

Hunt said too many guidebooks are superficial. "One of the things that are off-putting are guidebooks that see sunshine everywhere. It's so unrealistic."

The book is expected to begin showing up in bookstores this week for \$12.95.