

LRL

LAND ROVER LIFESTYLE

DEBUT ISSUE

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WHERE THE PAVEMENT ENDS



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SANTA FE:

A SCENT FOR ALL SEASONS

BY JULIAN SMITH



SANTA FE IS THE BEST-SMELLING CITY IN AMERICA. THIS IS NOT AN HONOR I BESTOW LIGHTLY. MANY DIFFERENT CORNERS OF THE COUNTRY HAVE THEIR OWN DISTINCTIVE ODORS: THE DAMP PINES OF WASHINGTON, THE TANG OF TEXAS BARBECUE, EVEN NEW YORK CITY'S UNIQUE BLEND OF GRIT AND EXHAUST THAT ALWAYS, SOMEHOW, MAKES ME FEEL RIGHT AT HOME.

But New Mexico, and Santa Fe in particular, takes things to a whole new level. There's no place that smells as good, and unique, as the Land of Enchantment, in every season of the year. It's as if the censers the Catholics brought up from Mexico made the fabric of the place with the aroma of adobe walls and crystal-clear air. Start to signal the high desert is waking from its slumber. The mountains are still covered with snow, but many fruit trees are fooled into thinking spring has arrived. In town, the melting is over and the life is in the air, and lilacs, lupines, and other flowers are awakening too, heading up the mountain bikes on the Dale Ball trail network northeast of town. Over seven miles of trails can be accessed from Upper Canyon Road or Hyde Park Road (NM 475). Maps at every junction show you where you are.

Winter's essence is more of a sensation than a fragrance; the cold, dry air makes the inside of your nose tingle, despite the bright sunlight. By December, the Santa Fe ski hill (505-982-4429, www.skisantafe.com) is in full swing. The addition of the new Millennium Triple Chair in 2005 brings the lift count to seven, and the snow is just as fine and light as you'd expect at 10,000 feet in the Southwest. Afterwards, treat yourself to a soak in an outdoor wooden hot tub at Ten Thousand Waves (505-992-5025, www.tenthousandwaves.com), a Japanese-style health spa 3.4 miles up Hyde Park Road from town. If you're feeling especially decadent, opt for a private indoor tub and a massage.

Spring is also a great time for a stroll among the galleries on Canyon Road, especially on Friday evenings, when many are hosting openings and receptions. Santa Fe is the second largest art market in the country after New York City. Galleries line the lower section of the road from downtown. The neighborhood has a rich history, offering everything from traditional to ultra-modern fiber, beadwork and jewelry (652 Canyon Road, 505-955-8513). A popular genre, including landscapes and abstracts, is the impossible to conceive pose. For the complete experience, grab a drink and a bite at a chic spot like The Compound (653 Canyon Road, 505-982-4353), Geronimo (724 Canyon Road, 505-982-1500) or El Farol (808 Canyon Road, 505-983-9912), which offers tasty tapas and live music most nights.



Photo by Deborah Fleig



Photo by Deborah Fleig

RELAX IN ANY SEASON AT SANTA FE'S PREMIER SPA, TEN THOUSAND WAVES.