

ROBIN RECOMMENDS

Lake Mead: Gila River's Kai restaurant. Tucson's Arizona Inn. Robin Sewell, host of "Arizona Highways Television," has fun things to do. travel.azcentral.com.

TRAVEL Q&A

Compass Points offers a reader advice about New York City tours. T2

CANCUN DEALS

The Mexican beach resort can be a credit-card buster or a bargain getaway. T5



YOUR PICTURES

Phoenix couple's Egyptian odyssey inside. More reader travel photos at travel.azcentral.com. T2

TRAVEL

SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2009

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC TRAVEL.AZCENTRAL.COM

SECTION T

Among California's wonders are (clockwise from right) the McWay Waterfall in Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, the majestic John Muir Wilderness and the lush ferns and magnificent trees in Redwood National and State Parks.

BRIAN VANDER BRUG/LOS ANGELES TIMES



CREAM OF CALIFORNIA



By Hugo Martin
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Coming up with a list of California's ultimate parks and wild places is like being asked to choose your favorite family member. Each one is special.

If you choose the most popular parks, you end up with a list of the most crowded and developed sites. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park averages 5 million visitors a year. Choose the wildest, most pristine spots, and you'll have isolated areas that are virtually inaccessible. The state's topography and geology make the

DIVERSE PARKS
CAPTURE
SPRAWLING
STATE'S
MAGNIFICENCE

See PARKS Page T3

4 European lodges with odd accents

By Howard Shapiro
PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Some specialty hotels become the focal point of a vacation because of their distinct qualities. We've found four odd European hideaways you may want to check out on your next trip: a former hovel turned artsy hotel in Italy, a lighthouse in the Netherlands, a French fortress and a former Swedish jail. They're perfect anytime getaways, but especially nice when you're looking for off-the-beaten-path accommo-



Guilty pleasure: This former fish prison is now a 100-room lodge. **INSIDE:** A long hallway in the lodge. T4

Finalists named in 7 Wonders poll

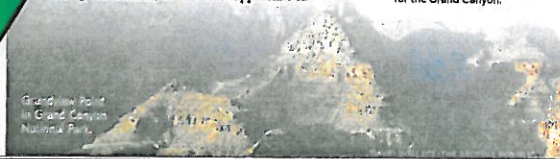
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Grand Canyon, the Matterhorn and the Great Barrier Reef are competing with 25 other spectacular natural landmarks in the final phase of the global poll to choose the "New 7 Wonders of Nature." The Amazon rainforest, the Dead Sea, Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa and Ecuador's Galapagos Islands are among the finalists, ac-

ording to the organization New 7 Wonders led by Swiss adventurer Bernard Weber. People can vote by Internet or phone. The winners will be announced in 2011. "This campaign should contribute to the appreciation — of our environment and not just the one in our country but worldwide," Weber said. "If we or our children want to save anything, we should first appreciate it."

A panel of experts chose the finalists among the 77 nominees that gained the most votes in an early round of polling. People had suggested 261 landmarks all over the world.

Vote for a Wonder
Want to vote for the Grand Canyon as one of the world's New 7 Wonders? Go to travel.azcentral.com and click on "Vote for the Grand Canyon."



Travel deals

White Mountains
BUY 3 NIGHTS,
GET 4TH FREE

Hidden Meadow Ranch, about 10 miles north of Greer, is a very good reason to cool off in the White Mountains: Book three nights at the luxury guest ranch, get a fourth night for free. The nightly rate, which starts at \$600, includes all meals, activities (including horseback riding, archery, fishing, hiking) and accommodations in a luxurious log cabin for two people. The offer is valid for travel through Sept. 4 and is based on availability. Good on Rancher's Package only. The lodge is on Forest Road 118, north of Arizona 260.

Details: 866-333-4080, hiddenmeadow.com.



Lake Havasu
STAY, JET SKI
FOR LESS

Days Inn in Lake Havasu is featuring a Stay and Jet Ski special that gives guests a one-night stay and a two-hour Jet Ski rental from Whitt Rods for \$99.99. The offer is good Sundays-Thursday only, excluding holidays. Valid through Oct. 31. Details: 800-835-2410, or e-mail kgallo@daysinnlakehavasu.com; mention AZOT Stay and Jet Ski Special.

ONLINE NOW: For more Arizona travel deals, go to travel.azcentral.com and click on wauvasa.com.

Disney World
YOUR PAL FLIES,
PLAYS FOR FREE

Southwest Airlines Vacations has a Friends Fly & Play Free offer that will help you meet Mickey for less money. Buy a package that includes the flight, accommodations at a Disney Resort Hotel and "Magic Your Way" Theme Park tickets, and every second person flies and plays for free. Offer valid only when staying at Buy 1 Get 1 Free rooms. View the choices by choosing "upgrade room" during the booking process. Packages must be booked by 4 p.m. Aug. 6 for travel before Dec. 15. Blackout dates: Nov. 24-Dec. 1. Details: 800-243-8372, www.southwestvacations.com.

Reported by Alison Stanton. For more dining, food, travel and home deals, visit deals.azcentral.com. E-mail your deals to deals@azcentral.com or call 602-444-8236.

Las Vegas Advisor T6
Your Travels T2
Compass Points T7

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