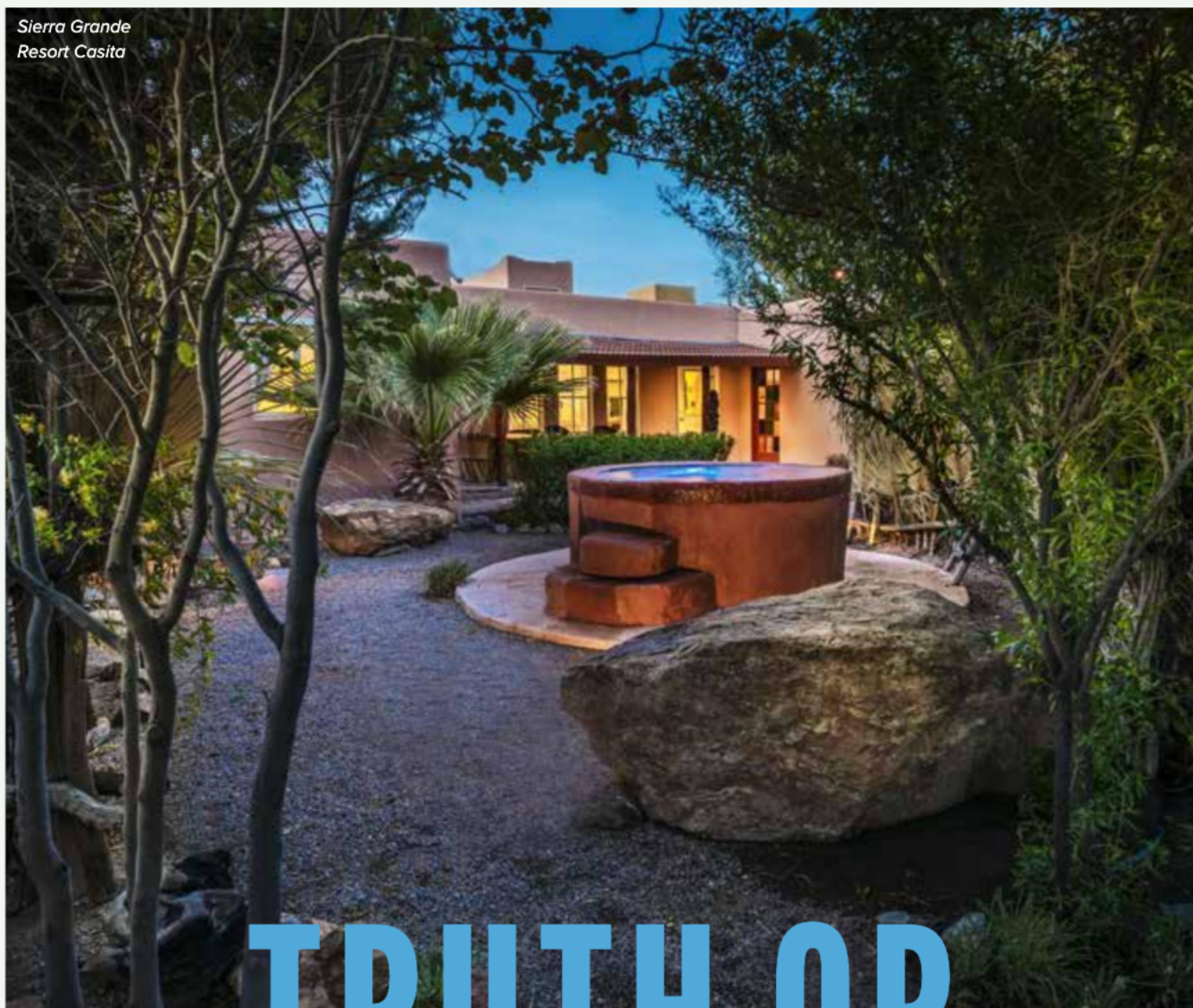


HEALING WATERS AND SOUTHWEST ADVENTURE ON THE RIO GRANDE



TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Two hours south of Albuquerque, Truth or Consequences sits on the Rio Grande, framed by desert mountains and big New Mexico skies. The mineral springs here have drawn visitors for

been slow but steady, marked by an influx of independent businesses and the thoughtful renovation of vintage motor courts and hot spring resorts in recent years. Its boldest reinvention

“T OR C OFFERS MORE THAN A DOZEN WAYS TO SOAK, FROM VINTAGE BATHHOUSES TO BOUTIQUE RETREATS.”

centuries—from Pueblo and Apache peoples to Spanish settlers, who called it *Ojo Caliente de Las Palomas*. By the 1880s, cowboys were soaking in the first adobe bathhouse, and by the 1920s, it had become a thriving spa destination, then known as Hot Springs. Today, called “T or C” by locals, this desert town of just 6,000 residents remains small in size but big in character, where healing traditions and reinvention are benchmarks. “People come here and love how unique it is,” says Gina Kelley, Executive Director of the Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway Visitor Center, who relocated two decades ago, “for the hot springs and affordable real estate,” and has watched the small desert town evolve while holding fast to its roots.

Popular with road trippers in summer and snowbirds in winter, Kelley notes T or C’s renaissance has

come in 1950, when Hot Springs agreed to rename itself after the popular NBC radio show *Truth or Consequences*. Host Ralph Edwards, a champion of polio research, fulfilled his promise to broadcast from the newly christened town—a fitting link for a community once home to a polio hospital. What began as a publicity stunt soon became part of its identity, celebrated each May with parades, rodeos, and live music during the Truth or Consequences Fiesta. Despite the new name, Kelley adds the town has never strayed far from its wellness roots. “Recreating at Elephant Butte Reservoir and driving the Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway to explore the ghost towns are popular with visitors, but our mineral springs are the star attraction,” she says.

Today, T or C offers more than a dozen ways to soak, from vintage bathhouses

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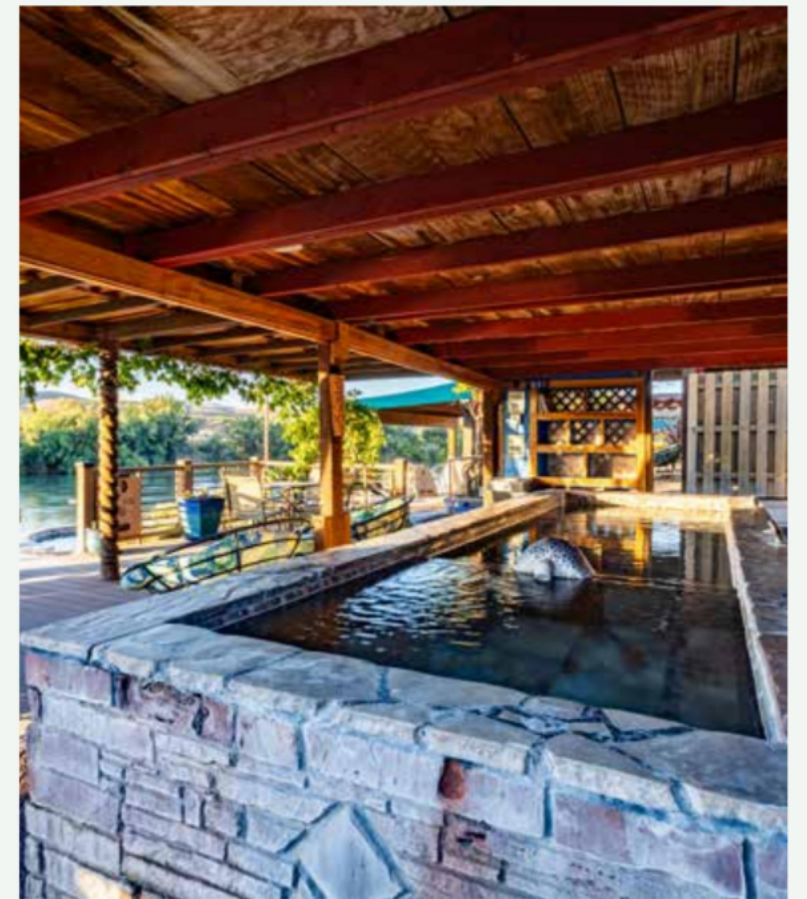


Barrel Sauna

to boutique retreats, and although among the nation's most mineral-rich, the waters are notably free of the sulfur odor often associated with geothermal springs. At Riverbend Hot Springs, the only spa on the Rio Grande, communal and private pools reward with river and desert views. Hot Springs Glamp Camppairs its private tubs with yurts and retro trailers, while the newly renovated, adults-only Hoosier Hot Springs caters to those craving quiet. Sierra Grande, a mission-style brick lodge built in 1929, holds a special place in Truth or Consequences' story. "The property featured the first registered hot mineral water well in town, anchoring a tradition that continues to define the community," says Eva Mendoza, Ted Turner Reserves' general manager of southern New Mexico guest operations. Turner purchased Sierra Grande in 2013 as an overnight retreat for Ladder and Armendaris ranch guests; today, it offers a restorative hot springs and spa experience. "We welcome visitors from across the Southwest, as well as travelers who stumble upon us and are always delighted to discover this unexpected jewel," Mendoza says. "Many arrive seeking rest and renewal and leave with a deeper appreciation for T or C's healing waters, rich history, and local spirit."

"FRAMED BY DESERT MOUNTAINS AND BIG NEW MEXICO SKIES."

Beyond its storied hot springs, Truth or Consequences has grown into an arts hub, with galleries, murals, and the Second Saturday Art Hop (now in its 20th year) energizing downtown. The historic El Cortez Theater, which screens films and hosts live music, and Truth or Consequences Brewing Company anchor Main Street. Kelley calls the Healing Waters Trail, winding from the Veterans' Home to the river, a must-do. Cultural highlights include the **Geronimo Museum** and the **Hamilton Military Museum**, curated by local veterans who also built the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Veterans' Memorial Park. But T or C isn't only about looking back. As Virgin Galactic edges closer to regular spaceflights at the nearby Spaceport America, Final Frontier Tours from the visitor center offer a glimpse of T or C's future. For now, Truth or Consequences is precisely what its name suggests: surprising and spirited: a place to spend days soaking in thermal waters, and evenings stargazing under some of the clearest skies in the Southwest.



Riverbend Hot Springs