



Photos courtesy JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort & Spa

Camelback Inn Resort & Spa Scottsdale Epitomizes Southwest Hospitality

Written by *Merilee Kern*

As one of America's premier hospitality hotbeds, the city of Scottsdale hosts as many as 4.5 million overnight U.S. visitors in a given year with as many as 3.1 million of those visitor nights spent in area hotels according to a Scottsdale Visitor Statistics Tourism Study published in January 2018. Not surprisingly, the region is replete with luxury resorts all vying for those tourism dollars and an array of impressive accommodation options certainly abound. However, there's one property in particular with a preeminent pedigree that's forged its own formidable place in the city's history: the JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort & Spa.

Since its opening way back in 1936, this legendary AAA Four Diamond resort has cultivated a reputation for being one of the finest vacation spots in the U.S.—a distinction realized by impressing one patron at a time for decades on end. Camelback was reportedly a favorite of John Willard Marriott and his wife Alice, who frequently vacationed there prior to the Marriott family's acquisition of the resort in the 1960's. Today, the family still chooses to spend time at the Inn during various seasons and

for special events, such as the annual celebration of Mr. Marriott's birthday.

Even in its early years Camelback Inn stood apart from the pack, attracting U.S. Presidents like John F. Kennedy and Hollywood A-Listers like Clark Gable, Bette Davis and Jimmy Stewart (among others) who came to stay, play and revel in this hotel's brand of haute Southwest hospitality. Even today, Hollywood celebrities find solace in the sprawling 125-acre property, which undoubtedly provides a reprieve from the intrusiveness of life in the spotlight. But, one need not be a celebrity to relish in what this famed destination has to offer... which is quite a lot.

Unique Attributes

While there are many wonderful locations in the Scottsdale region, Camelback Inn offers a setting and experience all its own. One of the distinctive aspects of the locale is that it's situated between Camelback Mountain and Mummy Mountain in Paradise Valley, tendering spectacular views on every side. This panoramic mountain backdrop set against the indelibly sunny sky and starry nights in the background, and





lush desert landscaping rife with colorful gardens and greenery in the foreground, is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

In addition to its unique setting, the resort is known for its impeccable customer service, which workers credit to the company's philosophy that taking care of its employees will result in an enhanced ability to best care for customers. The satisfaction among staffers is exuded in every touch-point throughout

a guest's experience, throughout which smiles and "above and beyond" service abound.

Rave-Worthy Rooms

While Camelback Inn offers a myriad of room types to meet various needs and budgets among its 453 pet-friendly suites and casita-style accommodations with private patios, I have a personal penchant for the one bedroom King "Jackrabbit Suite." This 1,515 square foot respite boasts an elegantly appointed living room as well as separate dining and office spaces all with vaulted ceiling, multiple 65-inch Smart TVs, multiple gas fireplaces, and an enormous patio with private pool/whirlpool that can accommodate at least 20. It also has a wet bar and spacious kitchen outfitted with stainless steel appliances, including a full-size refrigerator with ice maker. This sweet suite provides an ample amount of space both inside and out, and the expansive exterior pool deck with plush seating, fireplace and a direct view of Camelback Mountain is worth its weight in gold.

Dining To-Die-For

If you're a gastro-traveler like myself, food and beverage is a downright essential part of a vacation experience and, fortunately, Camelback Inn delivers on this front as well with seven eateries at your disposal.

Their signature on-site restaurant—Lincoln, a JW Steakhouse—is unequivocally one to not be missed. It offers a traditional steakhouse concept with modern touches, including decadent dishes and processes that exemplify culinary ingenuity. Case in point are some menu notables that I've personally sampled and can attest that they'll knock your proverbial socks off. Dishes like the Lobster Escargot (be sure to save the complimentary Popovers to dip and sop the scampi butter); Garlic Lobster twice baked Potato (overflowing with a full pound of the succulent protein); Colorado Rack of Lamb with a delightful savory fennel crust; and the melt-in-your-mouth Snake River Wagyu Filet Mignon.

This steak and all others available, at this elegant eatery are cooked within the desert's one-and-only Josper Charcoal Oven. This specialized and coveted piece of kitchenware sears meat at over 1200°F on imported hardwood charcoal, giving them a uniquely-flavored crust that'll keep your mouth watering bite after bite. The charcoal, specially sourced from Argentina and Cuba, renders a unique, smoky flavor, while the oven simultaneously locks in that flavor and tenderness like no other. Guests can pair the prime meats with a sauce or add-on of choice, like King Crab Oscar or Maker's Mark Green Peppercorn.

Dessert is equally enticing, with the signature Classic JW Cheesecake a most popular choice. In fact, I'm told the Lincoln restaurant in London, England sells more than \$1 million dollars of this specific cheesecake every year. Life is short, order the cheesecake and savor the moment.



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Camelback Inn Resort & Spa

Beyond this bodacious steakhouse, the resort also houses Rita's Kitchen for fabulous breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner either indoors or al fresco, as well as Sprouts at the Spa and the pool-side Hoppin' Jacks, which offers casual options such as pizza and sandwiches. In addition to the dining options on the main property, Acacia at Camelback Golf Club has an open-air lounge with an outdoor fireplace where patrons can partake in American style fare.

Two bars are also located at the resort: Bar 1936 serving up inventive specialty drinks and shareable plates, and R Bar where the nightly live entertainment and signature margaritas are worth the visit unto themselves.

Activities Aboard

To also delight and indulge its patrons, the resort features a huge 32,000 square foot, award-winning spa providing guests the opportunity to exercise through fitness classes or a workout room (one of multiple); relax in a steam room, sauna or whirlpool; swim in the lap pool; enjoy a manicure or pedicure; or bask in premier spa services like various types of facials and massages.

The resort also offers 6 tennis courts, four sparkling pools and an array of outdoor hiking and biking adventures with bike rentals available.

For customers who like to get their thrills on the greens, the resort owns and operates two 18-hole championship golf courses at the nearby Camelback Golf Club, which offers a full country club experience.

Only minutes away from downtown Scottsdale, and just a 20-minute drive to downtown Phoenix and Sky Harbor International Airport, this hotel is well-situated for guests to get out-and-about. Some places of interest located nearby the resort include Cosanti, the Paradise Valley residence and sculpture studio of Paolo Soleri, as well as the Desert Botanical Gardens, Scottsdale Fashion Square, The Musical Instrument Museum, and the Phoenix Zoo.

A Modern Mindfulness

Although it's a resort with an extensive history, it's also a place of innovation and, as such, it aptly leverages technology to enhance the guest experience. Some such features include the option for guests to text requests to staff, resort-wide

WiFi, high-speed and wired in-room Internet options, encouragement of customers to share about their personal experiences via social media outlets, and their own highly active presence on multiple social media platforms.

Great for Groups

And last but not least, Camelback Inn's Paradise Ballroom is poised to be a legendary venue in its own right for group events, given the design, features floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking unmatched mountain range vistas that only this property can proffer. Here, groups and meeting planners can enjoy the picturesque elements of the Southwest while indoors. Mid-size groups can gather here for everything from social catering opportunities to high-end special events and galas. Quite notably, a walkway between it and their second ballroom is built to showcase no less than 40 pieces of artwork handpicked from Mr. Marriott's personal collection. I'm told this is a first-ever occurrence for the company, and that Camelback Inn is the only resort in the Marriott portfolio of hotels and resorts worldwide to have been honored with this impressive gift.

For more than 82 years, Camelback Inn has maintained a legacy and standard of excellence by welcoming generations of guests, Hollywood celebrities and U.S. Presidents. Its tranquil setting, private hiking trails, world-class amenities and dynamic interior and exterior architecture offer an authentic and unforgettable Arizona getaway that's sure to delight travelers for decades to come.

ABOUT AUTHOR

As the Executive Editor and Producer of "The Luxe List," Merilee Kern is an internationally-regarded consumer product trends expert and hospitality industry voice of authority—a travel, dining, leisure, and lifestyle expert who spotlights noteworthy marketplace innovations, change makers, movers, and shakers. She reports on exemplary travel destinations and experiences, extraordinary events and newsworthy products and services across all categories. Reach her online at www.TheLuxeList.com, on Twitter at [www.Twitter.com/LuxeListEditor](https://twitter.com/LuxeListEditor), on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/TheLuxeList and on Instagram at www.Instagram.com/LuxeListReviews.