

# On The Road With ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

## Cooling Off In Greer

By Robin Sewell • Layout By Wendy Parker

Ahhhhh...September. The time of the year when the kids head back to school, the population in the Valley seems to double and you get those phone calls from friends back East who find themselves in the midst of Fall. They describe those vibrant shades of auburn, maroon and gold, while we retort, "it's still 100 degrees in the shade." Well, if you feel as if you are missing something this season, pull out your sweater, fill up the tank and make a beeline out of town towards cooler country by way of the Beeline Highway.

The road to Greer is gorgeous, paved with tall, lush, ponderosa pines, and is as green as the desert is brown. Your destination is only about four hours Northeast of Phoenix (about 18 miles from the Sunrise Ski Resort), and is known as a perfect getaway for anyone wanting to run away from the high heat.

Our adventure started with a visit to the studio of Western artist Russell Houston. He is known for his comedic and whimsical portrayal of two Laurel and Hardy looking cowboys who find themselves in some precarious situations playing golf. Russell actually got his inspiration from a picture in an old Arizona Highways journal. His characters have become so famous that they have inspired a one-of-a-kind charity event held every October in Eager (next door to Greer). Honestly, it sounded so unbelievably "wacky" that we had to see it for ourselves, so the fine folks at the chamber put on a mini version of their cowboy golf tournament just for us. In cowboy golf, the rules are a bit different. The horses are caddies, the cows are the greenskeepers, you get 3 clubs, boots are required and nothing is out of bounds. Oh, except if a ball ends up in the back end of a bear, you don't have to retrieve it. Let me tell you, even Tiger would find it difficult teeing off from a cowpie or keeping an eagle from swooping down and snatching your ball. Actually, in cowboy

golf, that's considered a birdie! After 9 holes, it's time to settle in for the night and I will tell you, sleeping



away from home never looked or felt this good.

This pristine hamlet has a reputation for quaint and cozy B&B's complete with homespun hospitality, and the Arizona Highways crew got to enjoy two of the best. The historic Greer Lodge was built back in the 1940's right along the banks of the Colorado River, and although it has undergone a major renovation, the charm of those early days is evident in every nook and cranny. I immediately felt right at home as if I was wrapped in a cozy chenille blanket wearing my most comfortable slippers. The bar, where the Arizona Highways crew had a few late night drinks, has that Cheers, everyone knows your name, kind of feeling and yet the piece de resistance is the million dollar view which will lull any 'type A' personality into a state of calm. And did I mention, I finally got to fulfill my 'River Runs Through It' fantasy by learning to fly fish? Unfortunately, there were no Brad Pitt sightings, but there is a fully stocked trout pond just steps away from your cabin.

If you are looking to escape from everything but luxury, your heavenly hideaway is Hidden Meadow Ranch just outside Greer. I knew I was on someone else's turf when an elk with an attitude casually crossed in front of my car. Yes Robin, you are not in Phoenix anymore as I walked into my two-story, Vermont-style log cabin that looked like something out of a Ralph Lauren catalogue. I was amazed that something so rustic could be so luxurious. Can you say Ritz Carlton in the wilderness? The emphasis is on doing everything you want to do without leaving the property, whether it's fishing, horseback riding, hiking, arts and crafts or just snoozing in your private hammock. Finish the day with a glass of fine wine, a gourmet meal and songs along a campfire. As you drift asleep beneath your fluffy down comforter, you'll smile knowing you've not only found the perfect getaway, but it's still 100 degrees back home in the shade.

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