

Since 1929

HACIENDA DEL SOL

A home away from home



Girls from across the country lived at the Hacienda.



Original courtyard & girl's rooms have been preserved.

A TUCSON LANDMARK, ONCE FORGOTTEN, JOINS THE LIST OF TUCSON'S TREASURED MEMORIES.

Native Tucsonans who know of a place called Hacienda del Sol might recall a property that was somewhat hidden in the northwest desert wilderness. Back in 1929, this ranch was known by few who actually lived here. It's existence in the Santa Catalina foothills was acknowledged by the community, but very few residents actually set foot on the property.

Today, the 34-acre property is found by way of a winding road with unobstructed views of the towering Santa Catalina mountains. Somehow the sky seems bluer, the air fresher.

Past the gated, mission-style entrance, you find botanical gardens as well as the unspoiled desert landscape that serves as the refuge for native wildlife. Just beyond the lobby, a small library has been kept intact, right down to the books from the 1930's. It becomes apparent that this is no ordinary inn. This place has a story to tell.

The Spanish Colonial architectural style was inspired by the Moorish architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries. Original owners, Helen and John Murphey, gave their personal loving touches to the construction of the ranch. Helen helped to carve intricate patterns into the library's beamed ceilings, while hand-hammered light fixtures and hand-painted tiles by the artisans of the region still remain. The Murpheys made this place their "hacienda", and for generations that followed, it would become a desert haven and retreat.

From 1929 to 1941 the Murpheys' desert dwelling was a home away from home for "girls only." The opening of Hacienda del Sol Ranch School for girls was met with national recognition. Pillsbury, Vanderbilt, Kellogg, Maxwell, Westinghouse, Spalding and Campbell were some of the prominent names on the roster. Hacienda del Sol offered a college preparatory curriculum and a true taste of western outdoor activities.

In the late 1930's, renowned Swiss architect, Josias Joesler was commissioned to rebuild areas of the Hacienda that were damaged by a fire. Joesler's protege, Lewis Hall, continued to make improvements to the property up until 1948, upon which time the Hacienda del Sol was turned into a guest ranch.

Hacienda del Sol is one of the oldest examples of Joesler's work in the region, greatly influencing architecture significant to Tucson.

As a guest ranch, it became a favorite hideaway for legendary personalities such as Spencer Tracy, Katherine Hepburn, John Wayne, Clark Gable and Howard Hughes. Sadly, the guest ranch proceeded to change hands several times over the years and was forgotten for a time; memories of Hacienda lost. Fatefully, it fell into the loving hands of a group of Tucson residents in 1995. With the vision of returning the ranch to its former glory, the new owners have taken great care to keep the original building and natural surroundings intact, along with the stories that are apart of the place. The characteristic details have been restored by their thoughtful efforts and labors of love. The architectural showpiece touts thick adobe walls, bee hive fireplaces and personal touches that can be found everywhere - from decor and furnishings to the unique gardens where herbs and edibles are a part of the landscape design.

The 1997 construction of The Grill helped to put Hacienda del Sol back on the map for good. No detail has been spared in the design and operation of this restaurant. In the first few years of operation, The Grill received recognition in publications such as Esquire, Bon Appetit, Gourmet Magazine and Wine Spectator. They have received top honors such as Award of Ultimate Distinction - *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*, "Best of" Award of Excellence - *Wine Spectator*, Culinary Gold Awards for: Best Grill, Best Sunday Brunch,

Best Place to Take Out-of-Town Guests, Best Special Occasion and Most Romantic - *Tucson Lifestyle Magazine*.

Between 2015 and 2021, the resort added 72 guest rooms to its inventory, along with a full service Spa with 6 treatment rooms in 2022. The beautiful Sonoran rooms boast magnificent views of the surrounding mountains and twinkling lights of the city. Each of the 550sqft rooms rivals the charm and uniqueness of the original rooms, suites and casitas, which have been renovated and refreshed to meet modern-day demands. The resort has received recognition in *National Geographic Arizona-Sonora Mapguide*, Top 10 Romantic Inns - *American Historic Inns*, Top 54 Inns in the U.S. - *National Geographic Traveler*, One of The West's Best Small Inns of the U.S. - *Travel & Leisure Magazine*.

Decades may pass before a place of significance is rediscovered. Hacienda del Sol, its story told, holds an important place in Tucson's colorful heritage. It is unobtrusive in character - a place of simple pleasures, where the sky still seems bluer and the air somehow fresher. It continues to capture the hearts of all who visit, and has one again become a home away from home for those lucky enough to find its gates.



**HISTORIC HOTELS
of AMERICA**

National Trust for Historic Preservation

*Adapted from an original article from
The Arizona Daily Star Nov 2000 by Liz Tang.*