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NEW MEXICO

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MAGAZINE

8 EARTH-FRIENDLY SINNS

**COLD COMFORT:
HERBAL CURES**

**PHOTO CONTEST
WINNERS**



Cozy Consciousness

REST EASY AT THESE EARTH-FRIENDLY INNS

By Ashley M. Biggers

Breathe in the smell of piñon as you take in a gorgeous view, curl up with a book in a light-bathed common room, or breakfast on blue-corn pancakes—and, at eight environmentally conscious lodgings in New Mexico, do it all guilt-free.

Inns in New Mexico are going green by saving energy and water, reducing solid waste through recycling and composting, and limiting harsh chemicals used for cleaning or gardening.

However, staying in a green accommodation doesn't have to mean spending more green. Many of these innkeepers say their savings in water and energy costs translate into savings for their customers. Seven homey bed-and-breakfasts and one resort seamlessly incorporate green practices into a variety of experiences.

Green from the Ground Up

Owners of four green accommodations have tailored their buildings' designs to minimize environmental impact and maximize comfort. The aptly named **Silver River Adobe Inn** in Farmington uses adobe, a staple of Southwestern architecture, to insulate against outdoor temperatures. Constructed from locally gathered mud and rough-sawn wood timbers, the B&B is nestled in a grove of cottonwood trees overlooking the San Juan and La Plata rivers. Co-owner

Diana Ohlson says that she and her husband, David Beers, incorporated eco-friendly features because they "liked the sense of being responsible for where we live. We wanted to be partners in alleviating some of the negative impacts in the area." www.silveradobe.com

Other lodgings use more unusual construction materials in their equally savvy designs. In Taos, Joan and John Dobson, owners of **Dobson House Bed and Breakfast**, built the distinctive curved walls of their home with more than 2,000 salvaged car tires and 20,000 aluminum cans, all covered with earthy plaster. (It looks better than it sounds!) These unconventional materials allowed the Dobsons to create architectural feats

such as a circular common room with 270-degree views of the Río Grande Gorge. The B&B is an Earthship, a term coined by Taos-based architect Michael Reynolds for his structures, which generate their own power and water through solar energy and catchment systems. In keeping with this vision, the inn's energy comes from 28 solar panels that cascade down



The view from El Monte Sagrado, near Taos



MICHAEL MELFORD

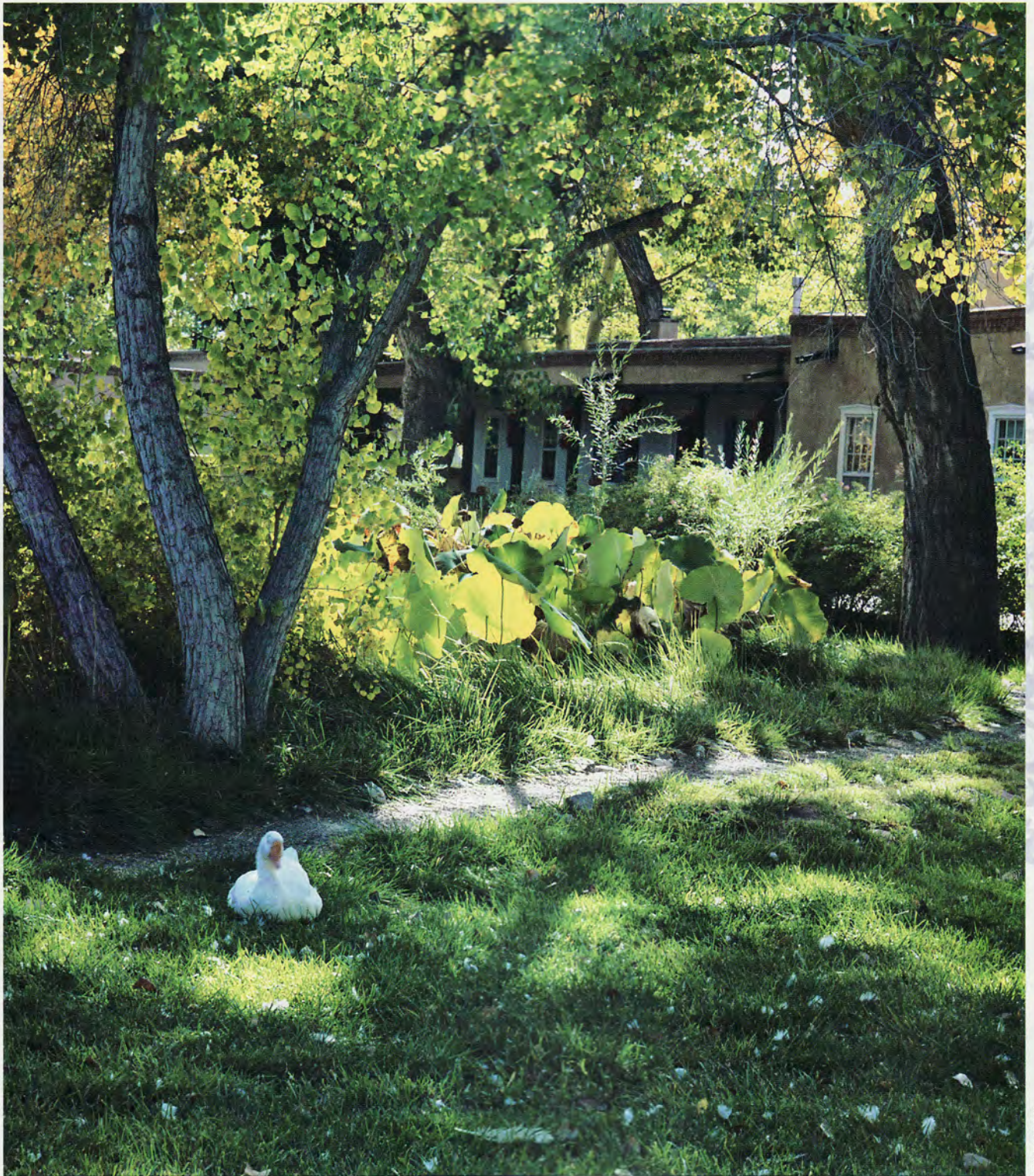
Along the Turquoise Trail, High Feather Ranch in Cerrillos was built using reclaimed materials. It also makes practical use of New Mexico's brilliant sunlight with its passive-solar design.

the mesa near the house. The Earth's temperature largely heats and cools the home, much of which is carved into the south-facing hillside. Walls adorned with recycled-glass mosaics sparkle in the sunny guest rooms. www.new-mexico-bed-and-breakfast.com

Marianna Hatten, owner of **High Feather Ranch** in Cerrillos, also built her pueblo-style inn with some reclaimed materials. The home, along the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway (N.M. 14), is constructed with barn wood and stacked straw bales. The natural insulation from the straw, paired with a passive-solar design, greatly reduces energy use. Hatten also uses water-wise features such as a high-efficiency boiler and water-saving fixtures. www.highfeatherranch.com

The luxurious **El Monte Sagrado Living Resort and Spa** in Taos sets a new standard for water and heating efficiency

(and is also known for its fabulous art collection, see "Artsapes," page 18). A machine mimics nature's water-purification processes with a cleverly disguised system of wetlands and reactors to reclaim the 4,000 gallons of gray and black water produced in the hotel daily. The cleansed water irrigates the exotic plant life on the property. Solar panels capture the energy needed to run the apparatus, called the Living Machine. In lieu of traditional means of temperature control, air from geothermal-capture points circulates through the resort, heating and cooling the main building as well as half of the guest suites. www.elmontesagrado.com



STEVE LARESE

Set in pastoral Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, the historic Los Poblanos Inn & Cultural Center is surrounded by an organic farm, an enormous lily pond, and lavender fields. Bath products in the guest rooms are scented with the locally grown herb.



Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Cultural Center



El Monte Sagrado Living Resort and Spa



Cimarron Rose B&B



High Feather Ranch

MICHAEL WELFORD

Conscious and Comfortable

Staying in eco-friendly accommodations doesn't mean sacrificing comfort. "It's not an either/or equation," says Tim Bauman, co-owner of **Hacienda Las Barrancas**, outside Santa Fe. "We're convinced we can provide our guests with a high-quality experience in an environmentally conscious way."

Guests in the four available rooms at Hacienda Las Barrancas slumber on high-quality linens, a choice Bauman says increases the guests' comfort and makes eco-sense, too. As other innkeepers agree, higher-quality linens are cleaned more easily, meaning less detergent and washing time, and they seldom require replacement. Bauman and his partner, Emily Chapman, have also refitted the B&B with improved insulation, low-water-use fixtures in the bathrooms, and energy-efficient appliances.

"These are cost-effective, simple things that are readily available for anyone," Bauman says. "We've seen that a little effort can have the greatest effect over the long term."
www.haciendalabarrancas.com

The menu at **Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Cultural Center** in Los Ranchos de Albuquerque showcases organic ingredients grown on the farm just outside the inn's front door. The farm also cultivates lavender, distilling the essential oils into soaps and other products offered as amenities in the guest rooms. In keeping with the farm's organic certification, the staff at Los Poblanos cleans the inn with natural and biodegradable products. A cultural destination in itself, Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Cultural Center preserves the pastoral lifestyle that once predominated in the Río Grande valley.
www.lospoblanos.com



MARK ERIKSON

Outside Silver City on the doorstep of two nature preserves, Bear Mountain Lodge has gorgeous views and is owned by The Nature Conservancy.


Sincere Stewards

Cimarron Rose B&B lies among 20 acres of ponderosa pines along the Continental Divide, 30 miles southwest of Grants on N.M. 53, where hiking and mountain-biking opportunities abound. Co-owners Sheri McWethy and Tom Kennedy renovated the 1970s-era wood-timber home before opening it as an inn. A former employee of the National Park Service, McWethy says she's always had a conservation ethic. "We just have a holistic way of looking at life. It's just been the way we do things," she says. McWethy cultivates native plants in a garden near the inn, which is certified as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat for the more than 80 species of birds fluttering there. She nourishes the garden with rainwater siphoned from the roof.

www.cimarronrose.com

Another birder's paradise, the **Bear Mountain Lodge** in Silver City encourages appreciation and protection of the Gila and Mimbres Nature Preserves. From the lodge, which is owned by The Nature Conservancy, guests can explore the wilderness area on a guided tour with the staff naturalist, Mike Fugagli. In addition to other green features, the lodge decorates with Mission-style furniture, crafted locally from sustainably harvested, small-diameter trees as part of a forest-restoration project.

www.bearmountainlodge.com

Each of these eight green lodgings promises to help preserve natural resources while ensuring guests the utmost in comfort. It's a promise that will keep New Mexico enchanting for some time to come. 

Ashley M. Biggers is a graduate student at Arizona State University, but New Mexico is where the Albuquerque native comes to unwind.

Silver River Adobe Inn
www.silveradobe.com



El Monte Sagrado Living Resort and Spa
www.elmontesagrado.com



TERRY THOMPSON

Dobson House Bed and Breakfast
www.new-mexico-bed-and-breakfast.com



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Hacienda Las Barrancas
www.haciendalabarrancas.com



High Feather Ranch
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