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Travel: Castle Hot Springs, Arizona's first luxury resort, has returned to life after closing in 1976



Castle Hot Springs, which opened outside Phoenix in 1896 as Arizona's first luxury resort, recently reopened after being closed in 1976. (Courtesy of Castle Hot Springs)

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Never doubt the resilience of a great lady. Castle Hot Springs, known as the grand dowager of Arizona hotels, reopened last year, having been closed since 1976. Originally built in 1896, the renowned property was the first luxury resort in the state.

Located about an hour from Phoenix, at the base of the Bradshaw Mountains, the resort's hot springs produce more than 200,000 gallons of 120-degree water each day. Focusing on the rejuvenating, restorative benefits of the mineral-rich thermal hot springs and the desert environment, Castle Hot Springs soon became popular with the movers and shakers of the day.

Pioneering film director Cecil B. DeMille housed his cast and crew there in 1931 while remaking "The Squaw Man." Other famous guests include members of prominent American families (such as the Vanderbilts, Astors, Roosevelts and Wrigleys). After World War II, John F. Kennedy spent three months there recovering from his injuries.



The 210-acre property of Castle Hot Springs was purchased in 2014 by a philanthropic couple who are Arizona natives. (Courtesy of Castle Hot Springs)

Castle Hot Springs is now open seasonally from October through late June (for guests ages 16 and older only). "The response so far has been phenomenal," says Ryan Tomm, general manager, noting that he's already seen an uptick in

He also points out that while the storied history is a draw for many guests, the majority of the 32-room sustainably designed resort is new. The 210-acre property was purchased in 2014 by its current owners, a local philanthropic couple who are Arizona natives.

The resort offers outdoor activities, such as horseback riding, meditation sessions, pickle and bocce ball, archery and mountain hikes. The whole plumbing system is drawn from the spring water so, after a hike, you can soak in your room. There are various spa treatments as well as a history tour on Wednesday afternoons.

Food lovers will appreciate Harvest, the resort's farm-focused restaurant. The property's greenhouse and one-acre farm grow more than 150 varieties of fruits and vegetables (including 30 varieties of heirloom tomatoes) native to the desert.



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