

DESTINATIONS | THE RECONNOISSEUR

New Mexico’s Inn of the Five Graces

Five-star kitsch marries secluded calm in this haute hippie bolthole



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In summer, there are few places I love escaping to more than the High Desert Southwest area surrounding Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico. I have visited this haute hippie part of the US several times over the past 25 years, and my most recent visit took me to The Inn of the Five Graces (about \$425-\$2,500 per night, first picture), a 24-room boutique bolthole.

The name “Five Graces” refers to the idea that the five senses are all vitally important to one’s enjoyment of life, and, from the scent of piñon trees to the authentic adobe buildings decorated with vibrant textiles, exotic antiques and colourful tile work, a stay here is an exercise in glorious sensory overload.

The Inn’s owner-curators, Ira and Sylvia Seret, source furnishings, decorative objects and linens from central and south Asia, and many of the suites – with names such as Luminaria, Firebird, Lapis, Jasmine and Persimmon – feature a mix of Afghan dhurries, Tibetan artefacts and Turkish kilims, as well as intricately embroidered Indian fabrics (second picture). My bathroom was vast and adorned with elaborate mosaics designed by Seret herself. In the main room, a traditional kiva fireplace (third picture) was perfect for one chilly summer evening.

During the day, being outside is everything, and the Inn’s secluded patios and shaded gardens were my favourite place to relax – from enjoying a breakfast of huevos rancheros (eggs, black beans, avocado and chilies on a tortilla) to tucking into a pitcher of margaritas and homemade tortilla chips and guacamole at the end of the day.

At Five Graces, the old west meets the far east with brightly coloured panache. The riot of colour and texture is not for everyone, but lovers of exuberant style will find this hotel the perfect spot from which to explore the surrounding pueblos and galleries.

For culinary inspiration in New Mexico, try this hippy mountain hideaway or book into this izakaya-style restaurant in a Japanese-style farmouse.

150 East De Vargas Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (+1505-992 0957; www.fivegraces.com).

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