

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

LOEWS VENTANA CANYON RESORT Tucson, Arizona

Just what is it that makes staying at **Loews Ventana Canyon Resort** so satisfying? It has its own distinct personality—this isn't just another resort clone. It has a strong sense of place—you know you're in the Arizona desert, not Miami or Dallas or Cancun. Then there's the staff—this hotel is expertly run. But best of it, there's a feeling of *intimacy*—not normally a word we would use in describing a sprawling resort with 398 guest rooms, but intimate is how it feels.

The resort surely deserves a “Best Views” prize for its splendid vistas. Its thoughtful architecture showcases Ventana Canyon's Saguaro-studded hillsides and the spectacular Santa Catalina range that rises precipitously behind. In this arid desert, an 80-foot waterfall (assisted during the dry season by an elaborate water recycling system) comes as a delightful and refreshing surprise.

The environmental sensitivity evident in the hotel's design and layout is one of the things that make staying here so pleasant. Split-face block, which closely approximates the natural colors and textures of the surrounding desert, is used both on the exterior and on interior stone columns, and it looks like it belongs here. Better still, all the property's precious Saguaro cacti and riparian habitats were preserved during hotel construction in the 1980s.

The lobby and lounge area, like the resort itself, is low-key and high-luxury. Its furnishings and living room-like seating areas contribute to a feeling of comfort and informality. Off to one side we found



The resort sports a golf course

a door leading to the stylish pool complex, where we particularly enjoyed the large and deep hot tub, nestled against a gushing, flower-covered rock waterfall.

Our Mountain View guest room was cozy and comfortable.

Thanks to clever

architectural design, the private outdoor patios in this hotel wing are arrayed against the mountainside in such a way that each feels private, with exposure to the superb natural environment maximized by floor-to-ceiling windows. A few negatives should be mentioned: Sound insulation could be better—we heard doors opening and slamming shut in the hallway. Although the oversized bathtub is big enough for a romantic twosome to climb into, the bathrooms themselves are a tad smallish. Coffee and tea are available from room service, but we missed not having a coffee/tea maker right in the room.

Food? In the **Flying V Bar and Grill**, southwestern décor reigns. Wooden tables, high-backed wooden chairs, red-frosted table lamps and stone columns compliment desert beige colors. One af-

ternoon we enjoyed tots of smoky *Herredura Añejo*, served with the traditional tomato-citrus “Sangrita.” These gave us an appetite for Tableside Guacamole. In this V Bar specialty, a server freshly prepares this Mexican treat according to the diner’s specifications.

We had a memorable dining experience in the resort’s signature restaurant, the **Ventana Room** (which is reviewed separately in this issue, as is **The V Spa** at the resort).



Comfortable rooms look out on a dramatic landscape of Saguaro cacti

Loews has a number of innovative guest service programs going—we particularly appreciated the “Home Sweet Loews,” which allows guests to ask for special amenities like air purifiers, humidifiers, hypoallergenic pillows or even workout equipment brought up to their rooms at no extra cost.

All this attention to the environment and to guest concerns results in an exceptionally restful and relaxing stay. As PR Director Kimberly Sundt notes, “Guests leave us with a greater feeling of balance, having spent time with themselves.” For Managing Director Matthew Kryjak, Loews Ventana Canyon is “a mind-set, an experience, a walk on a nature trail. We’d like our guests to find a peace they didn’t expect, to put things in perspective—to come to that special moment.”

Yes, by the time that checkout day rolled around, *we’d* arrived at that special moment, too—which is why we recommend Loews Ventana Canyon for your next visit to Arizona.

This article was written by Nicole Medvecky-Riggs and Jeffrey Riggs, Contributing Editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*. Photos courtesy of *Loews Ventana Canyon Resort*.

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