



Tubac Country Inn

Originally built to resemble a New Mexico train station, this gorgeous property now features spacious and immaculate rooms decorated with fine art by painters such as R.C. Gorman and Ross Stefan.

KATHY MONTGOMERY

IN THE LATE-AFTERNOON SUN, Tubac Country Inn glows like butter-scotch, making a rich background for the chile ristras hung along its facade and the French doors painted the vibrant blue of Mexican tile.

Along the wash that fronts the long wooden porch, mesquite trees cast speckled shade on blue agaves and towering prickly pear cactuses. Goldfinches hop from branch to branch while the sun makes pinpricks of light on the trees' spindly leaves, illuminating the spines of golden barrel cactuses as pale and yellow as beaten egg yolks. Near the outdoor fireplace, a miniature St. Francis maintains a silent vigil.

Despite being within walking distance of Tubac's shops and restaurants, the setting is remarkably tranquil, the soft bur-

ble of a fountain providing a backdrop to the mournful *hoo-hoo-hoo* of doves and the distant horn of a passing train.

Originally a mix of retail space and apartments, the long, narrow building was, in fact, built to resemble a New Mexico train station. Owners Ivan Drechsler and April Earickson say the facility was converted into Santa Cruz County's first bed and breakfast in 1992.

Today, the property includes five guest rooms and operates more like a boutique hotel, each room stocked with Arbuckles' coffee, a microwave and a refrigerator, although a 1,100-square-foot suite includes a full kitchen. Like at an artists' retreat, a "continental deluxe" breakfast of juice, yogurt, cheese and fresh-baked goods is delivered in a basket to each doorstep every morning.

Drechsler, a graduate of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, began his career in hospitality at age 14, working at his father's Washington, D.C., hotel. Earickson studied home, landscape and interior design at Oregon State University and spent her career in food service. Tubac Country Inn offers evidence of how beautifully the couple's backgrounds complement each other, both in marriage and in business.

Drechsler and Earickson looked at properties all over the country before settling on this one in 2005. The rooms are spacious and immaculate, decorated with Earickson's unerring eye, with white linens and pale plaster walls accented with natural wood shelves, gourds and baskets.

Silk flowers, bright cushions and fabrics patterned with Southwestern designs punctuate the rooms with bold colors, complementing the work of artists such as Navajo painter R.C. Gorman and Wisconsin artist Ross Stefan, who spent four years in Tubac in the 1950s. All these elements blend flawlessly, making Tubac Country Inn a feast for the eyes and one of Southern Arizona's sweetest retreats.

TUBAC Tubac Country Inn, 13 Burrue Street, 520-398-3178, www.tubaccountryinn.com