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An Oasis for All

JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort & Spa

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Photos by Elyse Glickman & The Hotel Californian



With cooler weather arriving, and the holiday season on the horizon, October is the perfect time to begin planning winter getaways, be it a golf or spa weekend with friends, a week of family time, a destination wedding, or a business retreat that will linger in the minds of the participants. While the planning process can be fun, the JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort & Spa is also ideal for travelers wanting a plug-and-play kind of vacation with the “choose your adventure” mindset built right into the 869 room/81 suite resort. And if your four-legged best friend is joining the fun, no problem. The \$80 million transformation of the 316-acre property has everybody covered.

The first things many Southern Californians consider when booking a getaway in nearby Phoenix are family-friendly features, outdoor activities, a glamorous spa, and a well appointed golf course—and the JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge checks all of those boxes. One of the resort’s star attractions is Wildfire Golf Club, with two panoramic 18-hole championship courses designed by Arnold Palmer and Nick Faldo. Revive Spa incorporates luxurious and rejuvenating facials, massages, and body treatments and updated fitness center along with relaxation rooms, a palm-lined sanctuary pool, cabanas, a sauna, steam rooms, fitness classes, a bistro, and a salon.

Wellness extends to the great outdoors with bike rentals and easy access to nearby hiking and fitness trails. True to JW Marriott tradition, there are several activities designed for children and young teens with a variety of interests, from athletic activities, to art and culinary sessions. As the pickleball craze has swept the country—and Southern California in particular—the resort now boasts a Pickleball Center where guests can book hourly court time on 17 lighted courts as well as group and one-on-one instruction with a certified pickleball instructor.

The JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge’s status as a true desert oasis was recently and dramatically enhanced this year with the opening of the 140,000-square-foot AquaRidge WaterPark. The \$18 million pool refresh encompasses an improved “lazy river,” Wildfire Grove, and Havasu Playground with three new water slides, including the only dual-person vertical wall tube slide at a resort west of the Mississippi. Although these refreshed amenities will appeal to the kid in everybody, the luxury enhanced Sedona Springs (which includes personalized concierge services and a stargazing area) and exclusive adults-only Sky Island (with an infinity edge plunge pool, hot tub, and fire pits) will satisfy guests just wanting to chill out. Sky Island also includes exclusive space for weddings and private events overlooking the lake and



golf course.

Poolside food and beverage outlets include Havasu Bar & Bites and a food zone area with shaded tables and seating, Canyon Creek Bar for kid and adult-friendly refreshments, and Desert Ridge’s Taqueria for a savory meal pre- or post-swim. Those who wish to splurge on a more luxurious pool experience can book a Canyon Creek Day Suite with prime access to the lazy river, a secluded area with lounge seating, a private bathroom, air conditioning, multiple TVs, and a personal towel bin along with amenities such as seasonal fresh fruit, chilled water, and sunscreen. The original, kid-friendly Wildfire Grove includes the popular “Just A Splash” pool bar with its Southwestern and barbecue menu. Optional Wildfire Cabanas are equipped with a misting fan, spacious couch and TV, seasonal fresh fruit, chilled water, sunscreen, personalized service, and two chaise lounge chairs.

Guest rooms and suites come standard with dramatic Sonoran desert and mountain views, lush garden landscaping, and complimentary bottled water. However, the most recent design upgrades incorporate contemporary furnishings, accessories, and lighting with themed elements (fire, water, earth, and sky), floor-to-ceiling soundproof windows, a JW Luxury Bedding Package, spacious living room sitting areas, plush robes, Smart TV, and Aromatherapy Associates Bath Amenities. In addition to the lavish presidential and ultra-premium suites, the resort offers Patio Fire Pit Rooms and wellness Suites for those who want to enjoy the resort’s best amenities in a more private and customized setting.

Like other JW Marriott properties, this one is home to several upscale and casual restaurants that have earned a following among Phoenix residents. Chef Angelo Sosa sets the culinary direction with Tia Carmen, touted as one of “The 12 Hottest New Restaurants in Phoenix” by a local magazine when it first opened. While the restaurant’s foundation is inspired by his aunt’s prowess in the kitchen, he also delves into local landscape, farmers, and communities to forge a creative food menu. Meritage – An Urban Tavern, adjoining the Wildfire Golf Club, attracts locals and visitors alike with creative pub food favorites as well as 50 different Arizona craft beers. Twenty6 is a reliably chic cocktail and bourbon bar with creative bites, and later this year, Asian-fusion fans can discover Chef Sosa’s Kembara.

Rooms begin at \$287 per night. For more information, visit marriott.com/en-us/hotels/phxdr-jw-marriott-phoenix-desert-ridge-resort-and-spa, or call (480) 293-5000 for reservations. 🏡

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