

Sedona tackles the stiffest competition

Good Morning America has already chosen Sedona as one of the Top 10 Most Beautiful Cities in the United States. Now the popular destination is working on a couple of additional accolades.

Cathedral Rock in Top 25 in quest as the 8th Wonder of the World

Out of 350 worldwide destinations, Sedona's own Cathedral rock (pictured here) is among the Top 25 destinations in the competition to become the 8th Wonder of the World. Voting continues to take place until September 30, here: virtualltourist.com/8thwonder

Two Arizona wines score big

Burning Tree Cellars and Page Springs Vineyards and Cellars have been recognized with the first-ever 90-point scores for an Arizona wine by *Wine Spectator*. Specific wines recognized were the 2010 Page Springs Cellars Colibri Syrah, Clone 174 and 2010 Burning Tree Cellars Colibri

Syrah, Clone 99. Both of these Arizona wines were made from grapes grown on the Colibri Vineyard in southern Arizona and blended, bottled and cellared at Page Springs Cellars in Cornville.

El Portal Sedona Hotel in the running for Best Pet Friendly Hotel

El Portal Sedona Hotel is in the running for the 10 Best Readers' Choice contest for readers of *USA Today*, as the Best Pet Friendly Hotel. Voting wraps up on September 2, so vote really fast, or check here for results: 10best.com/awards/travel/best-pet-friendly-hotel/

Nobody does canyons like Arizona

Sedona is a great base camp for two popular canyon destinations. As Sedona angles for that 8th Wonder of the World award, you can also use it as your jumping-off spot to visit one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, our own Grand Canyon. Even closer is Oak Creek Canyon. Enjoy shady woodlands among soaring cliffs, hikes such as West Fork Trail, natural water chutes at Slide Rock or a picnic on the banks of the creek at Grasshopper Point, while the kids discover what you've known since you were young: the ol' swimming hole beats the pool every time. visitsedona.com

Sedona Marathon registration open

The 9th Annual Sedona Marathon takes place on Saturday, February 1, 2014, and registration has already opened for those who wish to join over 2,500 runners participating in the 10K, Half Marathon and Full Marathon races through the scenic Coconino National Forest. 928-204-1123 SedonaMarathon.com

Sedona Event and Activity Highlights

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 14

40th Annual Festival del Tlaquepaque

- For this celebration of Mexican Independence Day on Saturday, September 14, the plazas, patios, and streets of Tlaquepaque are a festive combination of color, music, and dancing in the spirit of old Mexico. Lively mariachis, the heart-pounding rhythms and beats of flamenco dancers and the mouth-watering tastes of Mexico fill the day. 928-282-4838 Tlaq.com

SEPTEMBER 28-29

Sedona Winefest - This two-day celebration features great wines from the Verde Valley, Prescott and southern Arizona wine growing regions. 928-284-8657 SedonaWinefest.com

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 12-13

Sedona Arts Festival - This annual celebration features the work of fine artists, as well as a gourmet gallery, interactive Kidzone, food and prizes! Admission fee supports arts education. 928-204-9456 SedonaArtsFestival.org

OCTOBER 19

Pumpkin Splash - Kids enjoy a pumpkin patch in the pool, with games on deck, bounce house, pumpkin decorating and face painting. Held at Sedona Community Pool, hosted by the City of Sedona Parks and Recreation. 928-282-7098 SedonaAZ.gov/Parks

OCTOBER 19

Sedona Main Street Paint Out - Watch nationally recognized plein air artists each complete a painting in two and a half hours. Free Uptown event sponsored by Sedona Main Street Program, presented with the Sedona Arts Center. 928-204-2390 SedonaMainStreet.com

OCTOBER 19-26

Sedona Plein Air Festival - Contemporary plein air artists paint from life outdoors, capturing moments that reflect ever-changing colors, light, shadows, temperature and shifting elements. 28-282-3809 SedonaPleinAirFestival.com

OCTOBER 31

27th Annual Safe & Fun Trick Or Treat - Halloween, from 5-8 pm, Uptown. Merchants welcome ghouls and ghosts at their storefronts for great treats. This free community event promises a howling good time. SedonaMainStreet.com

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 1-2

Día de Los Muertos Celebrations at Tlaquepaque - Come to Tlaquepaque's Patio del Norte and Patio las Campanas on Friday and Saturday, November 1-2. Expand your knowledge of Día de los Muertos through the beauty and creativity of Ofrenda installations by making a personal offering for friends, family members or even special pets that are missed. 928-282-4838 Tlaq.com

NOVEMBER 29 - DECEMBER 7

Festival of Trees - Experience the holiday trees at Tlaquepaque, beginning on Friday, November 29. Artists and galleries have over 45 Christmas trees and gingerbread houses, fully decorated in fun and exquisite ways. Kick off your holiday season and maybe pick up your own beautiful themed tree, already pre-decorated. 928-282-4838 Tlaq.com

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 6

Holiday Tree Lighting and Santa Visit - On December 6 from 5-7 pm at Sedona Center plaza in Uptown, enjoy tree-lighting, entertainment and Santa visits. Free event. SedonaMainStreet.com

DECEMBER 7

Breakfast with Santa and Jingle Bell Run - December 7, 7:30-10 am. Free, at the Sedona Teen Center. Start the morning out right with a short run through Posse Grounds Park, decked with jingle bells. Next is a free pancake breakfast, plus crafts, games, face painting and a visit from Santa himself! 928-282-7098 SedonaAZ.gov/Parks

DECEMBER 14

Festival of Lights - On Saturday, December 14 from 3-8 pm, a cherished tradition including lighting 6,000 luminarias in Tlaquepaque's courtyards and walkways at 5 pm. Luminarias honoring cancer survivors can be purchased in advance for \$10. 928-282-4838 Tlaq.com ■