

***242** of our Favorite Things!

PHOENIX

Best of the Valley

featuring: Radical Restaurants ★ Readers' Picks
Top Shops ★ Media Mavens ★ Grumpy Cats
Glam Gowns ★ Freaky Fests ★ Arts & Culture

plus: *Museum Basements Revealed!*

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Best

Best Reason to Miss a Flight Food and Art at Sky Harbor

Sky Harbor has become a destination in its own right. While other major city airports are content to get people up and out, Sky Harbor has evolved into an innovative microcosm of Valley culture, with more than 600 pieces of local art on display throughout its terminals and a bevy of outposts of beloved local restaurants. Travelers can feast on signature dishes like tacos from Barrio Queen and Cowboy Ciao's legendary chopped salad. Too bad our weather rarely causes extended layovers. 3400 E. Sky Harbor Blvd., Phoenix, 602-273-3300, skyharbor.com

Best Way to Give Your Dinner Party Serious Cachet Invite Vincent Guerithault

Your friends would probably enjoy a dinner party at *chez vous* even if it was takeout pizza and pre-made salads from the grocery store, but that doesn't mean that you should settle. Raise the culinary bar and splurge on a showstopping dinner party cooked by chef Vincent Guerithault of Vincent on Camelback. He'll educate you and your guests on techniques and flavor pairings and lavish you with decadent ingredients – a wintry truffle feast, anyone? Call Amy Fox: 602-224-0225.

Best Way to Make Cross-Cultural Connections Phoenix International Hostel & Cultural Center

Experience the storied communal culture of hostels sans the fear of being robbed while you sleep at this historic brick home, replete with meditation gardens, hammocks and a diverse staff offering tips, tours and insider insights into Arizona tourism. Located near the Roosevelt Row arts district, the hostel hosts tourists from around the world, as well as locals seeking an alternative to the resort staycation. It doubles as an event space, so check the schedule for concerts, art openings, poetry slams and community dinners. 1026 N. Ninth St., Phoenix, 602-254-9803, phxhostel.org

Best Local Adventure Seaplane Brunch

Brunch, already the most luxe of meals, gets an adventurous upgrade with this luxurious celebration of Arizona wildlife and food. A nine-passenger Cessna Caravan 208 carries you over a sprawling desert landscape of mountains, trails and Saguaro Lake before landing on the gentle waters of Roosevelt Lake. An oasis of nature and a sumptuous spread from Charleen Badman and Pavle Milic of FnB await you. It's a time for meditation and contemplation, of the epic land around you and the food that it produces. Available the second Saturday of every month. Reservations required; call FnB at 480-425-9463. desertsplashadventures.com

Best Park No One Knows About Barry Goldwater Memorial Park

Blink and you'll miss this gem of a park near the busy intersection of Lincoln Drive and Tatum Boulevard in Paradise Valley. Tucked away on the northeast corner, the xeriscaped park – dedicated to the late Arizona U.S. Senator and presidential candidate – features spectacular views of Camelback and Mummy mountains, a bronze statue of Goldwater sculpted by Arizona artist Joe Beeler, and a pedestrian path with stone benches near a cascading waterfall.

Best Break for Mom PlayGrounds Fun Zone and Café

Calgon may be able to take you away, but what to do with the kids? Why not let them cavort in this 3,500 square-foot indoor playground while Mom gets a much-deserved breather? The adjoining café offers coffee drinks, salads and sandwiches, along with healthy snacks to pacify child and fatigued parent alike. Admission costs \$10 for the first kiddo, with \$2 off for each sibling. 8190 W. Union Hills Dr., Glendale, 602-761-9663, playgroundsfunzone.com

Patrick McGroder III is a Buffalo Bills man, but he offers a perfectly rational explanation – his father, Patrick McGroder Jr., was a longtime Bills executive. In most every other arena, the Phoenix attorney bleeds Arizona. Particularly when it comes to Arizonans who bleed.

Over his 43-year career, the University of Arizona alum has championed some of the state's most high-profile personal injury and wrongful death lawsuits. He's the attorney who successfully sued the Ford Motor Company on behalf of Phoenix police officer Jason Schechterle, who nearly burned to death in his Crown Victoria cruiser. He also represents the family of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry, who was killed in the infamous 2010 border firefight where missing weapons from Operation Fast and Furious were recovered. Currently, he's working on the case of Jack Culollas, the ASU student found dead last year in Tempe Town Lake after going out drinking with his fraternity.

McGroder makes a lot of money for his clients, but he says the more important metric of his success is the lasting imprint these cases have on society. Following the Schechterle lawsuit, for instance, Ford corrected defects in the Crown Victoria. "I believe that I have an obligation, not only as a lawyer, but also as a human being, to do whatever I can to take care of my clients and to take care of society in general," McGroder says.

The attorney's folks-first ethos is reflected in his office. There are the expected pictures and clippings from McGroder's cases, and even a few from his weightlifting days at Notre Dame, but the vast majority of wall space is devoted to pictures of his family – including his youngest child, Iggy, glowing ferociously in her schoolgirl rugby outfit. The photos both put his clients at ease and remind McGroder of his roots.

"In my family, social service wasn't an option," he says. "It was just understood that you did it. And my father always taught me, do not take out of your community any more than you put back into your community. So I determined a long time ago I could be of most service to those whose lives have been torn apart."

—Zac Wood

Movers & Shakers

Patrick McGroder Tort Warrior

