

DEPARTURES

Marfa: West Texas Steps It Up

By Rima Suqi on July 25, 2016

Once little more than a whistle-stop, the high-desert town has become a mandatory pilgrimage site for art, design, and fashion types. But a go-with-the-flow attitude is a must.



Hotel to Book

The **Hotel Saint George**, while not winning any fans for its exterior, is a new 55-room property providing services Marfa formerly lacked and desperately needed. At four stories it dwarfs all other buildings; it has one of the town's only working elevators. The rooms are comfortable and designed in a now-standard boutique-hotel style. Dark neutral tones rule, except for the quilt folded over the bed (mine was, oddly, orange), and artwork by locals Mark Flood, Christopher Wool, and Jeff Elrod is hung throughout. Upholstery is charcoal gray, side tables are heavy wood stumps, rugs are fluffy sheepskin, and Richard Sapper's Tolomeo desk lamps flank the beds (beware: they get very hot very quickly). There are Aesop amenities and reliable Wi-Fi. The big lobby bar has a small but good menu of snacks (from spicy pickled eggs to lamb meatballs) as well as cocktails, available seven days a week (a rarity here), and **LaVenture** restaurant, helmed by chef Allison Jenkins (formerly of the Little Nell in Aspen), opens for fine dining on weekends. As much as locals may bemoan the design, they're patronizing the place, washing down freshly shucked oysters with tequila, having meetings in the lobby, and popping into the **Marfa Book Company** (also in the lobby). Rooms from \$195; 105 S. Highland Ave.; 432-729-3700; marfasaintgeorge.com.