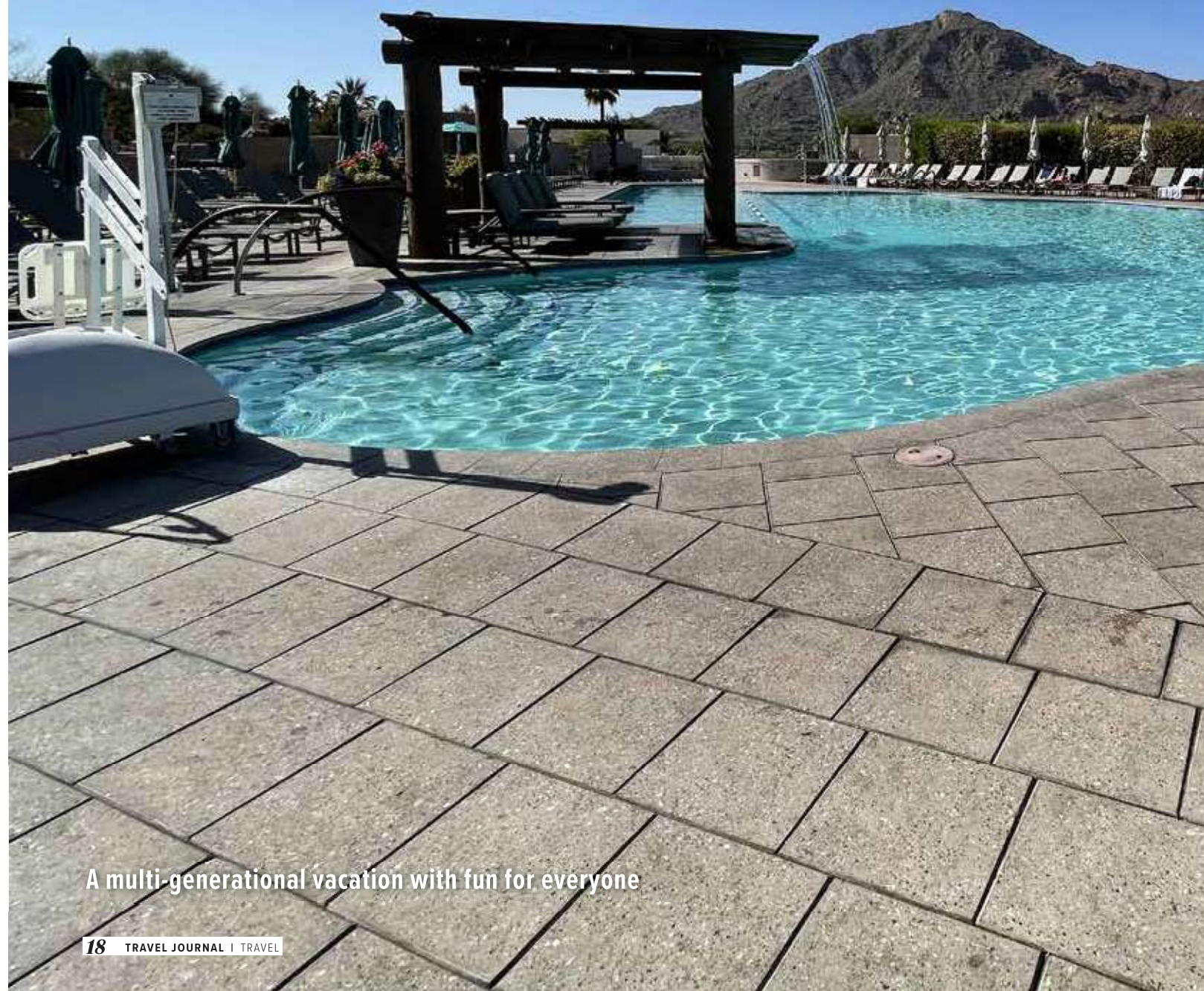


Taking the Kids to Scottsdale, Arizona



A multi-generational vacation with fun for everyone

When planning our spring multi-generational getaway, we looked at reasonably priced destinations that were reachable in less than a couple of hours. Our ideal location needed to address the diverse interests of an adventuresome couple and a family with a baby and a preschooler. We also had to consider our desire to remain active while eating a nutrient-dense diet. Finding mutually agreeable dates also needed to coincide with a hotel's availability.

After raising four sons, we realized that families traveling with small children should have realistic expectations since nap schedules and mealtimes rarely jive with rigid adult schedules. Sightseeing trips in cities and road trips to U.S. National Parks were not feasible. Our options focused on full-service resorts with nearby outdoor activities. To help narrow down our choices, we looked for online packages that included airfare, rental cars, upgraded accommodations, and resort credit. The JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa, outside Phoenix, Arizona, became our top choice.

Our spacious deluxe casitas were conveniently located on the resort property. We easily walked to the spa, the pool area, and the on-site restaurants where locally grown and seasonal ingredients dominated the menus. The meticulously landscaped grounds complimented the surrounding Sonoran Desert terrain. Our family experienced a sense of calm and relaxation in this transformative desert environment.

Using the resort as home base, each family unit was able to pursue their own interests while also finding time to relax at the resort's pool complex. We also coordinated schedules so we could eat together at least once a day. Flexibility became the key.

Our youngest son, Jordan, and his wife, Kayla, had the most flexibility, so they took advantage of many of the resort's amenities. With yoga classes, pickleball, and the spa facility, they remained active almost every minute of the day. Their schedule also included an early morning hike up Camelback Mountain. They took the Echo Canyon trail, with an elevation gain of about 1,400 feet in just over a mile. This popular trail, with limited parking, is known for its panoramic views of the Phoenix Valley.

ARTICLE BY SANDY BORNSTEIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE TRAVELING BORNSTEINS

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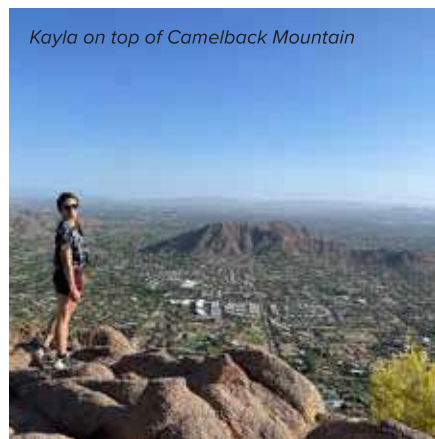
The author, Sandy, and Ira hiking on Gateway Loop Trail



Enjoying the pool with the family in Scottsdale



Kayla on top of Camelback Mountain



As avid and energetic Colorado-based hikers, they did not have any issues on the steep segment with the hand railing or the rock scramble in the latter half of the trail. However, they did encounter a handful of less adept trekkers who balked when the trail became steep and rocky.

On the same morning, we drove about half an hour to the Gateway Loop Trailhead at the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. While trekking on this popular, 4.5 mile moderate trail, we came across fellow hikers as well as runners, bikers, and mounds of fresh horse manure. The rolling terrain revealed key elements of the Sonoran Desert—giant saguaro cacti, prickly pear and native birds—along with views of the distant mountains. A slight breeze and an early morning start offset the intense heat. Had we started earlier and had more time, we might have tried one of the trails that fed off the loop.

While we were hiking, our son, Aaron, his wife, Candice, and their two children--Max and Isabela--ate a leisurely breakfast, meandered around the resort property, and found their way to the pool. With a covered floatation device for Isabela and a hat, rash guard, and floatation vest for Max, the children were content to play in the water for hours.

One morning, we accompanied Aaron and Max to the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park in Scottsdale. Max was in heaven at this 30-acre park where he was able to walk through a 10,000 square foot building with an abundance of model trains, tour a Roald Amundsen Pullman Car built in the 1920s, play in a kid-friendly covered playground, enjoy a restored carousel, and take a ten-minute train ride through the desert Arboretum. With so many kid-friendly attractions, it took a while to convince Max to return to the hotel.

To remain active, Ira and I worked out in the Resort's Fitness Room, swam laps in half hour segments, and did aerobic activities in the pool. Due to the intense mid-day heat, our family congregated around the pool until it was nap time.

Fortunately, the resort and numerous local restaurants were able to accommodate our diverse dietary needs—gluten free, pescatarian, dairy allergy, vegetarian, and a sesame seed allergy. On the day of our arrival, Rita's Cantina & Bar Southwestern menu appealed to everyone in our group and offered a convenient way to satisfy our appetites. Other nights were spent sampling the cuisine at Taco Madera and The Herb Box.

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