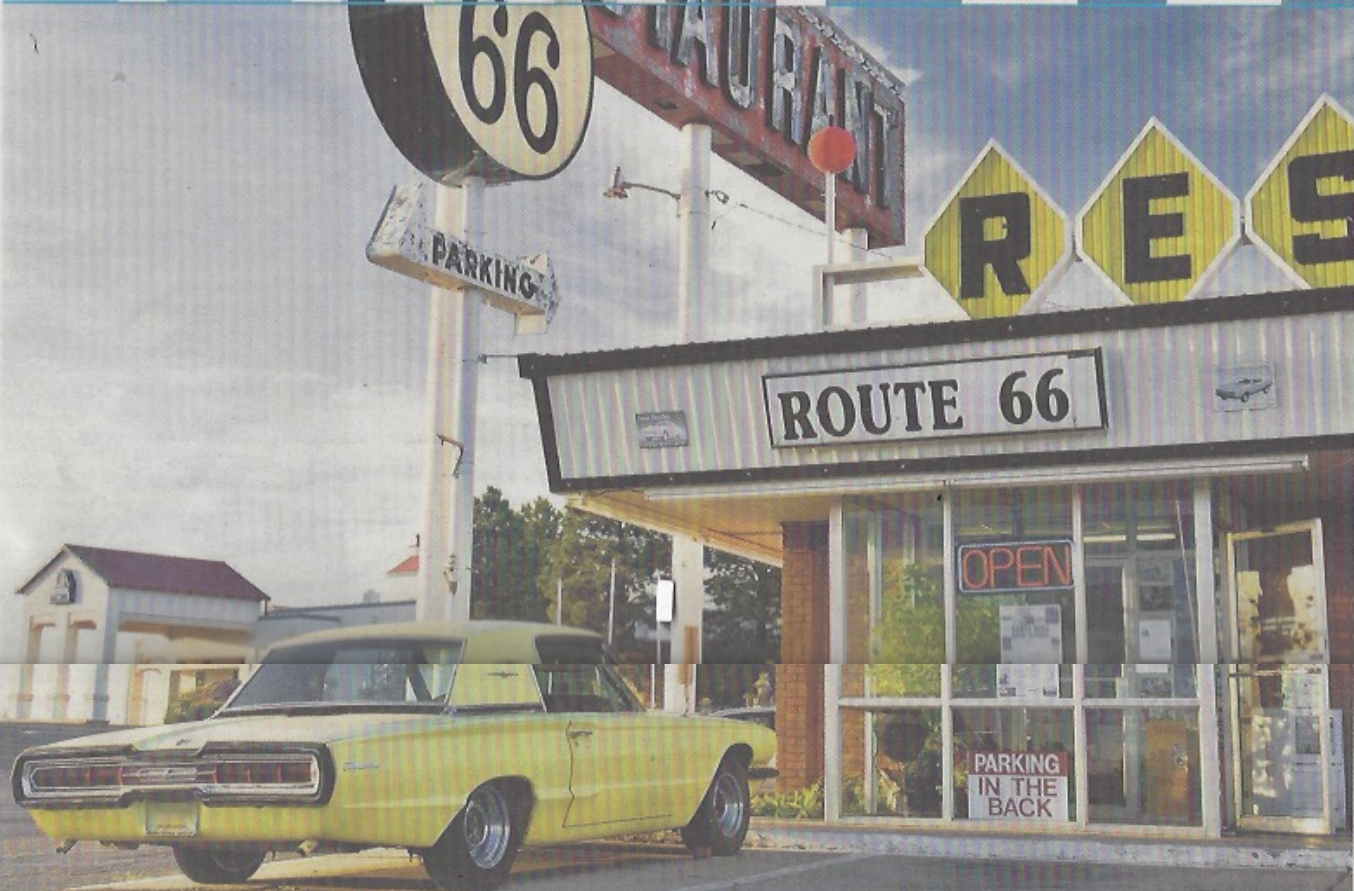


TRAVEL



ULTIMATE USA

From classic cars to little houses on the prairie:
20 vintage American adventures

COOGAN AND
BRYDON EAT ITALY

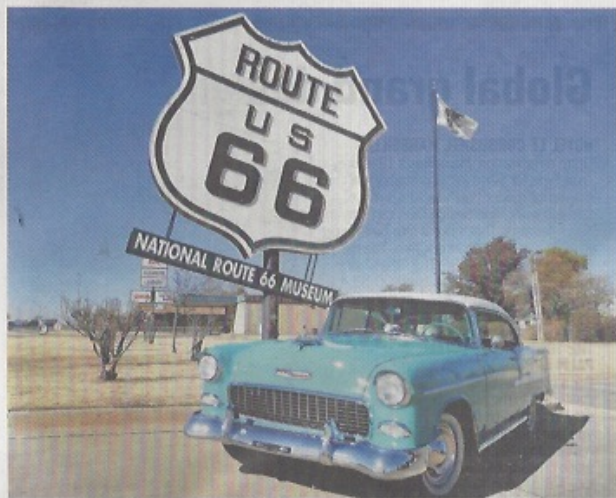
Where to find every restaurant
featured on their comedy road trip | p6

PREMIER'S INN

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Lanzarote hideaway | p4

WIN A GOURMET
BREAK IN PROVENCE

Your chance to stay at Alain Ducasse's
hotel: enter Where Was I? | p23



Surfing in Santa Cruz

An hour down the coast from San Francisco, Santa Cruz is the stuff of a million Californian close harmonies. Its classic hotel, the Dream Inn, was built in the 1960s for the first wave of surfing tourists, and a few years ago it was sent back to the future with a groovy vintage-inspired refit. The hotel leads straight onto Cowell's beach, a busy but time-honoured place to try surfing for the first time. Rooms look out over the ocean, and a walk along the beach brings you to the boardwalk, which has a history of more than 100 years of amusement rides and teenage flirtations behind it. It may have been glammed up, but the Dream Inn still plays to its strengths, with plenty of space to store surf gear and beach towels to borrow, allowing you to kick back with the minimum of fuss. 001-831-426-4330, dreaminnsantacruz.com; doubles from £125. Nearest airport: San Francisco, served by Virgin Atlantic. For details of airlines, tour operators and car-hire companies, see panel on page 15



Route 66 by pick-up truck

The 1950s and 1960s saw Americans burning up the highways in a new generation of gas guzzlers. Blacktop Candy's has polished the chrome and reved up a stable of classic cars from the era, throwing in some handy modern additions such as seat belts, sat nav and cruise control. Naturally, it plies its trade along Route 66, between Chicago and Los Angeles, suggesting a 19-day tour through Missouri, Arizona, the Grand Canyon (where you'll be pleased about the newfangled air-conditioning) and New Mexico (ditto), before heading into California. Cars include a 1953 Chevy pick-up, a 1965 Ford Mustang and a 1967 Camaro. 866-437-4077, blacktopcandys.com; car hire from £193 a day, plus a £360 one-way fee. Nearest airports: Chicago and Los Angeles, served by British Airways

New Orleans properly

Wiser Americans eschew the French Quarter in favour of neighbouring Faubourg Marigny when they come to Louisiana's party capital. It's less touristy, just as atmospheric and the jazz clubs — including the Spotted Cat Music Club — aren't primarily catering to middle-aged frat boys trying to relive their youth. The Frenchmen Hotel is recognisably New Orleans — a collection of rooms around a central courtyard, with all the wrought-iron balconies and decadence you'd want. 504-945-5453, frenchmenhotel.com; doubles from £47, B&B. Nearest airport: New Orleans, served by Delta, via Atlanta

Florida's wild side

The rangers in Florida's state parks may be good at conservation, but they're rubbish at marketing, which means their accommodation isn't well known outside America. Less than an hour by car from Orlando, but a million miles from its theme parks, Lake Louisa has 25 miles of trails to explore, as well as canoeing and fishing. Hardy souls can opt for "primitive" camping in the most remote areas — you have to backpack in

Seaside special
Above and below, boardwalks and boarding in Santa Cruz. Top left, get your kicks in a classic automobile. Left, kick out the jams in New Orleans

ULTIMATE USA

Yee-ha! The vintage America of your celluloid dreams is still out there.
Sarah Turner corrals the 20 essential Stateside experiences

and out — but there are also 20 simple cabins. No telephones, no televisions, but equipped with linen, dishes, pots and pans, each sleeps up to six people. floridastateparks.org; cabins £72 a night. Nearest airport: Orlando, served by Norwegian

Grown-up summer camp

In upstate New York, 80 miles from Manhattan, Mohonk Mountain House feels like summer camp for the more discerning grown-up (and their children). Surrounded by 40,000 acres of wilderness, including 85 miles of hiking trails, it has a lake to swim in, tennis courts, a jetty stacked with wooden canoes, and regular campfires. At its heart is a gothic-style mansion overlooking the water, and any downtime is best spent on one of the rocking chairs on its veranda, watching the sun set over the Catskill

855-883-3798, mohonk.com; from £178pp a night. Nearest airport: JFK, served by British Airways

FLW holiday home

One for architecture aficionados: a holiday house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. His "prairie" style took architecture out of the Victorian age and brought open-plan living to America. Several of his houses are now holiday rentals, including the Palmer House, in the leafy university town of Ann Arbor, Michigan, which lies on the edge of the Nichols Arboretum. It's the perfect place to admire his characteristic cantilevered roofs and total ban on 90-degree angles. For added design thrills, the house still contains much of the original furniture — and, in the garden, Lloyd Wright's Japanese-inspired teahouse. It sleeps six. flwpalmerhouse.com; from £210 a night. Nearest airport: Detroit, served by Delta

Shaker farm

The Shakers, an offshoot of the Quakers, were America's original austerity designers, producing perfect, pared-down furniture and fittings as a by-product of their religious fervour. Pleasant Hill, deep in Kentucky's bluegrass country — lush pastures, stud farms, full-on Southern charm — was once home to more than 600 members of the sect, and includes a farm with a full complement of their ingenious inventions. The oldest furniture is housed in a museum, but rooms in several of the other buildings can be



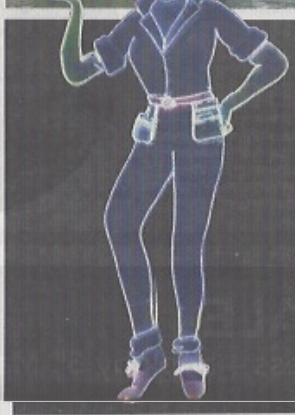
Mountains. It's convivial, still owned by the same family that founded it in 1869 and full of quirks — there are almost no televisions in the 259 rooms, tipping is discouraged and rates include all meals and most activities.



SUNDAY TIMES DIGITAL

Video: plastic palm trees and kitsch motels
at Willowoods, on the Jersey Shore
thesundaytimes.co.uk/travel

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first opened, in 1954, this Miami Beach hotel was about showing off — whether it was Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin on stage or guests sporting themselves in the newly conceived concept of resort wear. These days, the average poolside wardrobe is distinctly skimpier, and Pharrell Williams tops the bill, but the ethos is the same: you'll pay more for a pool cabana than you will for your room, and your fellow guests will always be prepped for preening and professional-level flirting. Arm yourself with plenty of space on your credit card, and prepare to surrender fully to its shallow, shiny charms.

305 535 3293, fontainebleau.com; doubles from £237. Nearest airport: Miami, served by Virgin Atlantic

Log cabin with a hot tub

Considerably more comfortable than the Little House on the Prairie, but just as old, Loom House, in North Carolina, is a log cabin, sleeping three, built by the Swiss-American Mast family in 1810. If pioneer life begins to pall, there's a wet bar — an area with a sink, running water, booze and little else — and a hot tub (Ma and Pa

Ingalls would be scandalised), not to mention oatmeal with flambéed fruit compote for breakfast, as the cabin is now in the grounds of a luxury hotel. North Carolina is hugely popular with American tourists, and it's at the culinary forefront of the South's sustainable, farm-to-fork slow-food movement. 828 963 5857, themastfarminn.com; from £130, B&B. Nearest airport: Charlotte, served by US Airways

Hipster central

Well-tended facial hair, a burgeoning barista scene and food trucks with ironic names make East Nashville a place with serious on-trend credentials. This is the cooler side of one of America's most music-centred cities — more Jack White than rhinestone cowboy. Like the sound of it?

Dream in neon
Above, for dinner, hit the diner. Top, take to the waters at Mohawk, a grown-up summer camp in New York State. Below, saddle up with the cowboys in Colorado



distilleries nearby. The Abbey in Fontana, on the less poney southern shore, is a family-centred resort with self-catering apartments and a rather nice spa. Resolutely American, with Little League games on the green and kids fishing from the jetty, it's beguiling and gentle — Gordy's Bait Shop has been dishing out coffee and cholesterol for decades, while movies on the beach are just \$1 a ticket. 262 275 6811, theabbeyresort.com; villas from £172, hotel doubles from £95. Nearest airport: Chicago, served by American Airlines

Lighthouses and clambakes

Nantucket is a shipshape island in the Atlantic that knows how to offer a fully immersive New England experience, being packed to the gills with lighthouses and whaling history, clambakes, old-money millionaires and fabulous sandy beaches. Much better for accommodation than Martha's Vineyard, where the Obamas summer — and just that little bit posher. For edge-of-America charm (there's nothing between you and Portugal), big Atlantic breakers, wall-to-wall weatherboard and wicker chairs, stay in one of the 32 rooms or four cottages at the Wauwinet hotel. From its jetty, you can take a boat tour around the island. 508 228 0145, wauwinet.com; doubles from £134, B&B. Nearest airport: Boston, served by British Airways

Fontainebleau with Pharell

The Fontainebleau has been fully blinged up for the 21st century. Even when it

woodshed and a four-seater outhouse. Surrounded by forest, meadows and precious little by way of human habitation, this is the sort of house the New England poet Robert Frost might have had in mind when he wrote: "And miles to go before I sleep." It does have a dishwasher, though. 802 254 6868, scottfarmvermont.com; from £149. Nearest airport: Boston, served by Virgin Atlantic

Midcentury motel

America's vintage motels are increasingly under threat of being gussied up into design-minded destinations rather than pit stops. One of the nicest things about the Austin Motel is that it has ignored the vagaries of travel fashion for more than 75 years. It's still family-owned, the towels are on the thin side, the lobby decor is, um, singular, but the motel is as neat as a pin, has a classic kidney-shaped pool and the welcome is warm. The same decent rates apply to weekdays and weekends, when Austin's hipster hotels like to hike their rates alarmingly. 512 441 1157, austinnmotel.com; doubles from £80. Nearest airport: Austin, served by British Airways

Little league by the lake

In Wisconsin, just over the border from Illinois, Lake Geneva has long been a summer escape for Chicago's elite. Chewing-gum magnates the Wrigley family built several mansions there, while the gangster Al Capone had illicit

rented, including eight in what was the Trustees' Office, where the deacons and deaconesses once lived. 859 734 5411, shakervillageky.org; doubles from £66. Nearest airport: Lexington, served by US Airways, via Chicago or Charlotte

Colorado ranch

Big skies, big bison... frankly, just big: the Zapata Ranch, in southern Colorado, stretches over 103,000 wide-open acres of the high-altitude San Luis Valley. Part of a nature-conservation project, this is a serious working ranch, and some guests bring their own horses. Bison are left to roam free, but 200 head of cattle allow guests to play at being cowpokes from cock's crow to campfire. Activities vary according to the season — May is about branding cattle — and there are overnight horseback pack trips into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and fishing on the Rio Grande. Best to rock up in a big pick-up truck. And be sure to bring a big appetite. 719 378 2356, zranch.org; seven nights from £1,370pp, including all food and activities. Nearest airport: Denver, served by British Airways

Porches, rocking chairs and apple pies

The 1802 Amos Brown House, in Vermont, has been restored in the same historically rigorous way as Landmark Trust properties are in Britain (it's also part of the trust). It has three bedrooms, a chicken coop, a

→ You do? I do, too! Let's get married. Top O'Woodland is a Victorian house, stuffed with vintage finds, with its own wedding chapel where a simple elopement-style ceremony will set you back £100 (fancier weddings are available). Accommodation is a separate cottage in the garden that sleeps six. 615 228 3868, topofwoodland.com; cottage from £89, based on two sharing. Nearest airport: Nashville, served by US Airways, via Charlotte

Birthplace of the blues

The junction of highways 49 and 61 in the Mississippi Delta is known as "the crossroads". It's in Clarksdale — the musical spark plug to Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, John Lee Hooker, Sam Cooke and Ike Turner. At the Shack Up Inn, you can stay in an original shotgun house or take a room at the former cotton gin — and listen to a new generation of blues musicians in the bar. It's poised between designer and Deliverance in style, and significant improvements in comfort have been made since its sharecropping days, including air-conditioning, but in general the air is kept deliberately non-gentrified — as its website points out, "the Ritz we ain't". 662 624 8329, shackupinn.com; doubles from £39. Nearest airport: Memphis, served by United, via Chicago

Hike the Appalachian Trail

Taking on the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail — and its black bears, rattlesnakes and moose — is a classic midlife-crisis activity in America. If you don't want to walk all the way from Georgia to Mount Katahdin, in Maine, an easier way to sample the route is to opt for some of the Appalachian Mountain Club's catered huts. You'll find them in New Hampshire and Maine, and each is a day's hike from the next. Staying in them doesn't require membership, but the \$50 fee gives you a 20% discount on accommodation. Most of the huts are off-road and off-grid. The staff — "cross" in the AMC's terminology — hike up with provisions. And they've had time to perfect it — the club has been going strong since 1876. outdoors.org; from £72pp a night, half-board. Nearest airport: Boston, served by British Airways

Non-trashy trailer park

El Cosmico, in Texas, is packed with meticulously renovated 1950s trailers, as well as scout tents and teepees. It has a reading room specialising in philosophy, history,

Watch the trailer

Right, stay at the world's hippest caravan park — complete with hot tubs — in Marfa, Texas. Below, tackle part of the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail. Bottom right, a day at Dollywood comes with a banjo soundtrack



architecture and poetry, alongside the more usual campsite essentials of communal kitchen, provisions store and shower block. When you realise the campsite is in Marfa (population 2,121) — that improbable bastion of conceptual art

near the border with Mexico — the camp begins to make more sense. Only slightly, but enough. Guests can rent wood-fired hot tubs at weekends, and enjoy regular microfestivals and "happenings". In Marfa itself are arts foundations, including a couple dedicated to the town's most famous

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by its largely American visitors. The Inn at Christmas Place, in nearby Pigeon Forge, where the tinsel gets fluffed daily, gives you the chance to continue long after the park closes. dollywood.com; adults £35, children £27; 865 868 0525, innatchristmasplace.com;

rooms sleeping five from £80. Nearest airport: Nashville, served by US Airways, via Charlotte

Beer and fishing

Farm stays have been slow to catch on in the USA, but they're increasingly popular now that most American grandparents no longer live on a picture-book farm. Leaping Lamb Farm in Oregon taps into this. The farm has a

two-bedroom cottage, sleeping six, with the all-important porch. Guests can get stuck into the chores, splash in the creek or simply sit back and relax. The nearby hamlet of Alsea has John Boy's Mercantile for beer and fishing supplies. And, for show-stopping wines, Portland is only a two-hour drive north. 541 487 4966, leapinglambfarm.com; £120 a night, B&B. Nearest airport: Portland, served by US Airlines, via various American cities

Wick Thomas/Getty

artist, Donald Judd, and some excellent restaurants. 432 729 1950, elcosmico.com; tepees from £48, trailers from £66. Nearest airport: El Paso, served by American Airlines, via Dallas or Chicago

Dollywood!

When it comes to theme parks, it has to be Dollywood. Next to Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountains National Park, this festival of kitsch includes a re-creation of Dolly Parton's childhood home, her real tour bus, coal-fired steam trains, log flumes, rollercoasters and many more rides. And after all that activity, it's straight to Aunt Granny's All-You-Care-To-Eat buffet, for industrial quantities of fried chicken, cornbread and puddings. And sprinkles. This wallow in good ole Southern nostalgia is often taken with a hefty dollop of irony



Getting there and around

AIRLINES

American Airlines
0844 499 7300, aa.com
British Airways 0844
493 0787, ba.com
Delta 0871 221 1222,
delta.com
Norwegian 0843 378
0888, norwegian.com
United 0845 607 6760,
united.com
US Airways 0845 600
3300, usairways.com
Virgin Atlantic 0844 209
7310, virgin-atlantic.com

TOUR OPERATORS

Abercrombie & Kent
0845 485 1532,
abercrombiekent.co.uk
Audley Travel 01993
838755, audleytravel.com
Bon Voyage 0800 318 3012,
bon-voyage.co.uk
Virgin Holidays 0844 557

3859, virginholidays.co.uk
Trailfinders 020 7368 1200,
trailfinders.com
North America Travel Service
020 7499 7299, [northamerica
travelservice.co.uk](http://northamerica
travelservice.co.uk)

CAR HIRE

Affordable Car Hire
0845 900 0420,
affordablecarhire.com
Avis 0800 284 5568,
avis.co.uk
Enterprise 0800 800227,
enterprise.co.uk
Hertz 0843 309 3099,
hertz.co.uk

VISAS

Remember, British travellers to the USA need to apply in advance for a visa waiver: \$14 (£8.40), from esta.cbp.dhs.gov. For more info, see discoveramerica.com

Morning: Play golf in Monastir
Afternoon: Visit the amphitheatre in El Jem

One day in Tunisia
free to live it all



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