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Wheeled warriors  
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Connecting with the past



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*The 90-room View Hotel opened in October 2008 and is the first hotel in the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park.*

## Way off the beaten path

There's more to Native American lands than glamorous casinos and hokey cowboys-and-Indians venues, thank goodness. Over the years, a quiet shift toward travel experiences that showcase Native heritage in the American Southwest — while shunning stereotypical attractions and kitschy accommodations — has surfaced. And in some cases, this shift toward tourism that brings travelers face to face with the rugged, sometimes remote beauty of Indian territories results in an authentic yet more modern and higher-end experience.

Hotel Santa Fe is the only Native American-owned hotel in Santa Fe, N.M. The secluded Hacienda section of the hotel has 35 rooms decorated with Native American art. Hacienda guests also receive butler service. Owned by the people of the Picuris Pueblo, the hotel has a spa whose treatments include Indian healing rituals and ingredients. Much of the staff is Native American, and the arts-and-crafts gift shop is also owned by the Picuris. The Native American package includes a tour with a local historian to the San Ildefonso, Santa Clara and Picuris Pueblos and through northern New Mexico.

About four hours northwest of Albuquerque, N.M., Canyon de Chelly (pronounced de SHAY) National Monument is home to distinctive architecture, artifacts and breathtaking rock imagery. Equally important, it is home to a vibrant community of Navajo people. Part of the National Park Service (which partners with the Navajo Nation to manage park resources), Canyon de Chelly consists of Navajo Tribal Trust Land. The park's North and South Rim Drives are self-guided and open all year. So is the White House Trail, which drops 600 feet in just over a mile (if you want to tackle a trail without a guide, this is your only opportunity).

Situated in Canyon de Chelly is the Thunderbird Lodge, a trading post renovated into a modern hotel that's run by

an all-Navajo staff, and boasts a roster of knowledgeable Navajo guides. All rooms, equipped with wireless Internet, are adorned with prints and paintings by Navajo artists, plus curtains and beddings emblazoned with tribal motifs.

About 150 miles away, a hotel has appeared for the first time in the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. The much-lauded, 90-room View Hotel opened in October 2008 on the border of Utah and Arizona and is the recipient of much good press, such as this mention in the April 19, 2010 issue of the *New York Post*: "Because it's owned by a Navajo, this is one business that takes its eco-friendly claims seriously. (Navajos believe they have a sacred duty to live harmoniously with the land.) First off, the energy-efficient building was designed to blend into the natural surroundings. Then there are all its green practices: recycling, low-flow showers, organic linens and native plantings. The restaurant features mostly locally sourced food grown without pesticides or fertilizers. ..."

The owner of The View, Armada Ortega, is a 20-something, sixth-generation trader in Indian crafts, with a knack for creating a décor that seamlessly blends rugged tradition and modern luxury. Each room has etched pottery lamps, a woven Navajo rug, Navajo-designed Pendleton-style blankets, and bathrooms with granite countertops that mirror the rock landscape outside the hotel. Art and heirlooms, including sand paintings and kachina dolls, are on display in the lobby.

The hotel, the only one in the tribal park, is the starting point for several Navajo experiences, including guided hikes of Monument Valley Tribal Park.

Explore Navajo Interactive Museum also makes its home in the Navajo Nation. The Tuba City, Ariz., venue is filled with murals, film clips, maps and cultural displays about Navajo artifacts and traditions.

# To tell the truth

A Jewish Holocaust refugee from Austria teaches high school on an Indian reservation and meets an Ojibwe tribal judge. They fall in love, get married and have a son who goes on to write Native American literature.

Sounds like the stuff of great fiction, but in this case, it's art imitating life. Novelist and critic David Treuer is indeed the son of a Jewish Holocaust refugee and Ojibwe tribal judge.

The Princeton-educated Treuer was born in Washington state but moved to the edge of Minnesota's Leech Lake Reservation at age 7 and grew up there.

His experiences serve as fodder for his writing, but his exploration of what he believes to be the "true" history of Native Americans is a continual one. His books aim to capture a more accurate portrayal of Native Americans than what is often perpetuated by white and Native American writers alike. In fact, in a 2006 interview with *The New York Times*, Treuer stated that many Indian depictions are "inauthentic and flawed."

While attending Princeton and studying under Toni Morrison, Treuer began his first novel about an Indian reservation known as *Poverty* and the 8-year-old boy named Little who lives there. "Little," published in 1995, received critical acclaim. A mere four years later Treuer received his doctorate in anthropology and published his second novel, "The Hiawatha," about the fate of a Native American family encouraged to relocate by the government.

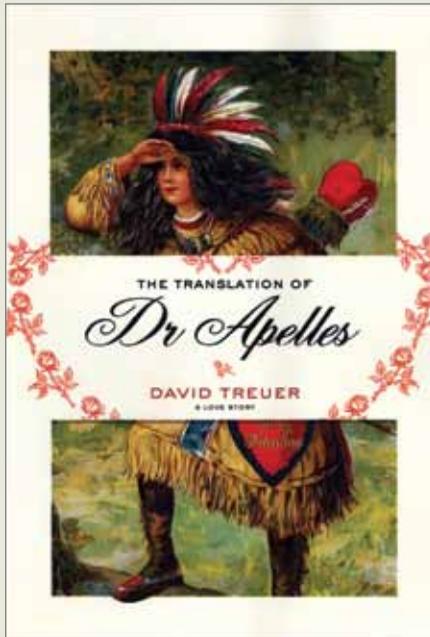
His third novel, "The Translation of Dr. Appelles: A Love Story," won a Washington Post Critic's Choice Award for Fiction in 2006. As a contemporary Native American who translates Native American texts, main character Dr. Appelles finds a manuscript that has been untouched for

years and is written in a language that only he speaks.

The novel takes us to the story within the story — a suspenseful, 19th-century Native American romance — and ultimately intertwines the two.

In "Native American Fiction: A User's Manual," also published in 2006, Treuer returns again to the idea that Native American writing should be judged as literature and not as a means of depicting Indian culture against non-Indian culture.

Some Native American writers, Treuer contends in this collection of essays, rely on stereotypes of "Indianness" passed down by white authors such as Walter Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and



*Treuer's latest work explores lost languages and romance.*

Walt Whitman. Even the most well-intentioned books and films, he argues, perpetuate cultural stereotypes about Native Americans in this country. He argues that novels by Native Americans should be viewed not as "cultural artifacts" but as literature.



*David Treuer*

His own "Indianness" is something he came by, understandably, as a child; his mother encouraged him to attend Ojibwe ceremonies, and he learned to live off the land like many of his Native American relatives.

He currently resides in Minnesota with his wife, a half Seneca Indian, and daughter, and recently spent more than a year back on Leech Lake Reservation.

Like many of his relatives, he hunted and harvested wild rice during this time, but his focus was a project designed to preserve the Ojibwe speech. Ojibwe is only spoken by around 15 percent of the tribe, so Treuer devoted himself to recording, transcribing and translating the Ojibwe language.

As the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship to Canada, a Pushcart Prize, the 1996 Minnesota Book Award and fellowships from the National Endowment for Humanities, the Bush Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation, Treuer is currently working as an English professor at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. He is also at work on his next project and says he is "focused on nothing else at the moment."

# Connecting with the past

Native Americans serve as the original founders of our nation's heritage and throughout a long history of triumphs and tragedies, they continue to represent a multicultural tapestry for years to come. During national Native American Heritage Month, we strive to recognize the many accomplishments, contributions and sacrifices they have made. The artists chosen for this celebratory Unity issue are three of many who pay tribute to the ancestry and time-honored traditions of American Indians.

## Karen Noles

Karen Noles was born and raised in the small town of Merna, Neb., and for the last 35 years, has made her home in the Flathead Indian Reservation located in the Mission Mountains in northwestern Montana. She began her career

as a greeting card illustrator for the Hallmark Card Co. Her artistic interest changed after visiting museum collections of early and pre-reservation periods of the first Americans. Noles was captivated by the exquisite bead and quill detail of their native dress. She says, "I love the opportunity to honor their

unique artistic expression as I attempt to display this artistry through my own art."

Noles notes that it is a blessing to have Native Americans modeling authentic period clothing and collectible artifacts. This privilege is metaphorically "heir apparent" in her piece, "Little



"Little White Dove" by Karen Noles

White Dove," a sensitive portrayal of a young girl adorned in a Native, tanned doeskin dress. Noles' fine brush detail of cut beads, cowrie shells and woven tapestry depicts "a classic example of Blackfeet imagination, artistry and craftsmanship." "Cheyenne Harvest" is a lifelike representation of a Cheyenne girl carrying the sacred Indian corn that was a main staple before the community began hunting buffalo. Noles says she loves portraying children because of their ability to "transport sacred moments in time and nature." It is Noles' desire "to



"Cheyenne Harvest" by Karen Noles

build a special moment" for her viewers to "savor those sacred moments in their own personal lives."

## Lisa Anne Fifield

Lisa Anne Fifield was raised in Seattle, Wash., and San Jose, Calif. As a young child, she and her family traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest to "remote and quaint places off the beaten track." It was during those many travels that Fifield was intrigued by the names of places detailed in the road maps they used. "I always had a great affinity for quirky, eclectic and beautiful Indian names," she recalls. Fifield says those names inspired her work the most. "It is initially the name that causes my artistic antennae to suddenly shoot up. Nine times out of 10 the name is either a tribe or location

"The Dance of the Elk Clanswomen" by Lisa Anne Fifield





of an Indian battle." After careful research of the name, Fifield imagines the story, then sketches it.

Fifield believes her work speaks to a time before European settlers arrived — when Native Americans and animals communicated together with nature. Fifield's work chosen for this issue speaks to that belief. The bare branches and cool colors of water and sky skillfully tell the story of her cover piece, "The Moon of the Leaving Geese." Father Bear and his cubs watch the Canada geese leave for winter as they prepare for hibernation. "Brooks Range" narrates the interaction of clanswomen with a female caribou. The women "bow to the caribou in homage and prayer for their safe journey to Brooks Range." A story unfolds in "The Dance of the Elk Clanswomen" with women as spiritual beings so closely connected to the elk in dance that one of the women levitates. The browns and grays of Fifield's work portray the beautiful subtleties of nature's cycle. Fifield's paintings begin with a name and she promises that from that name, endless stories will be told for a long time to come.

### Chris Pappan

Chris Pappan regards himself as an "American Indian living in the 21st century." He is of Osage, Kaw, Cheyenne River Sioux and mixed European heritage. Pappan convincingly says, "I make paintings to bring awareness that



*"The Wizard" and "Thank You Grandmother" by Chris Pappan*

Indians are still here." He is also quick to point out that his daughter, Ji Hae, is an important influence in his art.

His work, in an old traditional art form, brings that awareness to the forefront. A series of Pappan's work provides his audience with a relatively unknown history lesson about ledger paper. Pappan says ledger drawing began in the mid-1800s when Indians were first introduced to the paper. Many images of battles, hunting and ceremonies were recorded through drawings in ledger books provided by soldiers. Pappan is determined to continue that tradition by using contemporary ledger paper and illustrating iconic images of Native Americans.

In Pappan's "The Wizard," the image of a probable warrior has the look of weariness and contemplation. The feather is a gentle reminder of an image that some might have of the American Indian. "Thank You, Grandmother," Pappan tells us, is simply an homage to his grandmother, who always encouraged him to pursue his art. His grandmother's enlarged hand shows a sign of strength. Her eyes and pensive look exude wisdom and confidence.

Pappan states that it is his desire "to change distorted perceptions of Native Americans." Both of these works of traditional ethnic features, Native dress with tasseled beadwork and pillared strength could assist him in that endeavor.



# His food satisfies appetite, honors ancestors



*Executive Chef Jack Strong*

With awe-inspiring views of the Pacific Ocean and décor that pays homage to Native American culture, Chinook Winds Casino Resort captures the spirit of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, which own and operate it.

Within the resort, Executive Chef Jack Strong, a Siletz Tribal member, is cooking up dishes that his tribe has eaten for hundreds of years and infusing them with a modern twist. In fact, the Oregon resort provided Strong, who boasts an impressive 20-plus-year career in the culinary world, an opportunity to return home to his native Pacific Northwest.

Born and raised in Siletz, Ore., Strong's culinary journey began at Adam's Place Restaurant in Eugene, Ore. The restaurant's namesake served as a mentor for Strong, taking him around the world and helping to elevate his understanding of fine dining and varying cuisines. From there, Strong worked at restaurants that were rated as AAA Four and Five Diamond establishments, including Kai, which emerged as Arizona's highest-rated restaurant during Strong's tenure. It became the only Native American owned/established property that was honored with five stars and five diamonds.

As the chef de cuisine at Kai, Strong says his experience was a meaningful one. "The property has culture and language running through it," he says. "Kai" in (the Pima) language means 'seed.' One of our mottos is that we planted a seed and it grew into five diamonds."

*Heirloom tomato bisque*

During his stint at Kai, Strong co-authored and published the cookbook "The New Native American Cuisine," which details the history of the tribe and incorporates five-star recipes.

From Kai, he went to the renowned Salish Lodge & Spa, and when the opportunity to return



to his own tribe's casino resort came this past spring, he took it. "It seemed a good time to come back," he says. "It's unique for a tribal member to go back to his or her own property and be the chef."

At Chinook Winds, he manages numerous menus, including the deli, the buffet, the steakhouse, a seafood grill, the golf course restaurant and the banquet center. In every case, he relishes using local, indigenous ingredients, as well as seafood.

In addition to food, Strong is already signed on to host cooking classes and demos for Native American Heritage Month. "Community work is something I'm used to, and I'll be able to do more of that here now that I'm home," he says.

## Heirloom Tomato Bisque

Serves 6

- 2 each onions, peeled and chopped
- 1 each carrot, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh fennel fronds
- 12 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds
- 1 quart of apple juice
- 8 each brandy wine tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon
- 1/2 cup sherry vinegar
- Salt and white pepper
- 4 quarts salted water (1/2 cup salt)
- 1 brandy wine heirloom tomato concasse
- Ice bath
- 2 each fennel bulbs, chopped, reserve the fronds
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 bunch of fresh picked tarragon

In a large pot on medium heat, sweat the onion, carrot, fennel, garlic, coriander seeds and fennel seeds until translucent. Deglaze with the apple juice and reduce by half.

Add the chopped tomatoes and simmer until cooked through. Add the fresh tarragon and sherry vinegar at the end and simmer for another 10 minutes.

Puree in a blender and strain through a chinos or fine strainer, season with salt and white pepper, then cool.

In a saucepan, bring salted water to a boil. Score an X on the bottom of the reserved heirloom tomato and blanch just for a minute or until the skin starts to peel away.

Drop into ice bath and allow to cool. Peel and remove the outer layer of tomato meat, dice and toss into a bowl. Mix the diced concasse tomatoes with the fennel fronds, tarragon, olive oil and season to taste.

For plating place a round ring mold into the center of a soup bowl, fill with your diced tomato mixture, lightly pack and remove mold.

Garnish with nice sprig of fennel frond and pour warm soup tableside to finish.



## Pork and hominy pozole

Serves 4-6

- 1 ½-2 pounds pork shoulder or roast
- 2-3 cups canned or fresh hominy, rinsed
- 3-5 cloves garlic
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 6 cups water or stock
- Garnishes
- Cabbage or iceberg lettuce, shredded
- Onion, finely diced
- Radishes, thinly sliced
- Limes, cut into wedges
- Avocado, diced
- Oregano, dried
- Chile piquín, ground

Add the pork, hominy, garlic, salt and stock or water to a large pot.

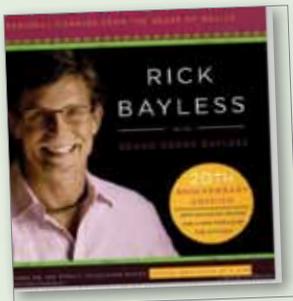
Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 ½ to 2 hours, or until the meat is very tender.

Remove the pot from heat.

Take the pork from the pot and set aside to cool. When cool enough to handle, remove the meat from its bones and shred it with your hands.

Add the meat back to the pot and simmer for another 10 to 15 minutes.

Adjust seasoning and serve with little bowls of your choice of garnishes so each diner can garnish his or her own serving.



# Cure for the blahs (and hunger)

Pozole, which means “foamy,” is a traditional pre-Columbian soup or stew from Mexico. It consists of corn, with meat, usually pork, chicken, turkey, pork rinds, sardine, chili pepper, and other seasonings and garnish.

Although meat is a primary ingredient, vegetarian and vegan versions of the dish also exist. This staple in Mexico is a well-known cure for over indulgence (particularly with alcohol), and those who believe in its preventive qualities often eat it in the wee hours of the morning. Pozole is also popular in New Mexico, where it is usually spelled “posole.” In many places it is considered a delicacy and is not an everyday food.

The three main types of pozole are white, which has a clear broth; green, which gets its color and flavor from hulled pumpkin seeds, tomatillos and green chiles; and red, which has a thick, brick-red broth laced with dried fruity and spicy chiles.

In certain parts of Mexico, one day a week is designated as “posole day.” Shops close early, work comes to a halt and people make their way to posole restaurants — which are just temporary arrangements of tables and chairs — where they indulge in the rich stew served in earthenware bowls.

Famed chef Rick Bayless, author of “Authentic Mexican: Regional Cooking from the Heart of Mexico,” has been eating pozole since he went to Mexico as a child. “Pozole has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember,” Bayless told the San Antonio Current in a 2008 interview. “It’s a staple dish throughout the country, though traditionally central Mexico is home of the red (rojo). Within Guadalajara you can find the white (blanco), and in Guerrero, the green (verde), but only on a certain day of the week.” The three together make up the colors of the Mexican flag, and the versions vary only slightly.

Some Mexican-American communities consider pozole to be a Christmas dish, but in Mexico any fiesta will do.

“Like tamales . . . everyone in the states thinks pozole means Christmas, but in Mexico, it is eaten all the time,” Bayless noted. “Pozole is really a party food, good for any time of year . . .”



*Some Mexican-American communities consider pozole to be a Christmas dish, but in Mexico any fiesta will do.*



# Wheeled warriors

An exhibition on skateboarding wasn't what many people might have expected to open at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of The American Indian in New York in December 2009. But "Ramp It Up" certainly produced the results the museum's staff had hoped for: interest that delayed its closing from June until August 2010.

Skateboarding has outstripped the traditional sport of baseball in popularity on some reservations, as more kids participate in board competitions than in Little League.

But the combination of the evolving daredevil sport and centuries-old traditions is not so surprising, says "Ramp It Up" curator Betsy Gordon. In an interview with [www.america.gov](http://www.america.gov), Gordon said skateboarding reinforces the Native American values of "courage, strength and resilience," as it facilitates "the passing of Native values in a modern medium."



Sac City Skatepark (Gila River Indian Community)

Even the sport has roots in the Native culture, an outgrowth of Hawaiian wave surfing. Since its beginnings in the early 1950s, when fans attached roller skate wheels to boards for "surfing" when waves were low, the sport has experienced periods

of popularity.

Skateboarding's physical demands have especially drawn young Indian men to form teams for competition. Young women, too, are attending skating schools and forming competitive teams.

Skaters frequently "ride with Native pride under their feet," according to information in the NMAI exhibition. The young athletes on the team called "4-Wheel Warpony," for example, honor their heritage by wearing traditional 19th-century Apache scout dress and use decks emblazoned with tribal iconography.

These competitors are encouraged by American Indian communities and companies that support attendance at skateboard schools, host skateboard competitions and build skate parks. Events like the annual All Nations Skate Jam ([allnationsskatejam.com](http://allnationsskatejam.com)) draw competitors who range from 20-year-old Bryant Chapo (Navajo), a semi-professional with seven sponsors, to 10-year-old Augustin and 7-year-old Armando Lerma, members of the Agua Caliente band of Cahuilla Indians.

Gordon has noted that young competitors bring "an incredible passion and work ethic" to their sport. "You fall a lot, but you get back up again and persevere."

In addition to the skaters themselves, Native artists and entrepreneurs have become vital contributors to the rising skate culture. Graphic artists, many of whom are also skaters, decorate skate decks and ramps with bold, modern renditions of ancient tribal icons.

"... They use their own graphics to teach about their history and culture and solidify the identity of Native skaters," Bradley says. Many will use traditional imagery with a contemporary twist — it's a great form of self-



Bunky Echo-Hawk (Yakama/Pawnee) holds three of the decks he designed for Native Skates. Photo courtesy of David Bernie.

expression." These artists have been joined by musicians and filmmakers whose work is inspired by the sport and skating culture.

Other Native American skaters have become entrepreneurs. They include Dustinn Craig (White Mountain Apache/Navajo), who founded the 4-Wheel Warpony skateboard company, which also sponsors the competitive 4-Wheel Warpony team.

Todd Harder (Creek) founded Native Skate to produce skateboards that foster knowledge of Native heritage by graphically displaying words in tribal languages on the decks. Jim Murphy (Lenni Lenape) founded Wounded Knee Skateboards and partnered with Harder in founding Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom), the first American Indian nonprofit for "fostering creativity, building courage, enabling cultural identity and pride, and promoting nonviolent and healthy physical activity through skateboarding."

The result of all this combined energy is a sport and culture that is not only popular, but is still growing — the subject of a major museum exhibition that was not so unlikely after all.