

| RENO, NV

Bright Lights, Big ^{Little} City

by Tony Banning

Reno packs an entertainment and recreation wallop worthy of its nickname, “Biggest Little City in the World.” Here Vegas-style glitz mingles with highbrow college culture and outdoor adventure. All the fun is set against a fantastic natural backdrop. The Truckee River courses through town and offers whitewater thrills while a mountain of outdoor recreation awaits in the nearby Sierra Nevada range. The community is making a hard pitch for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games. Its proposal is bolstered by access to eight major ski resorts and an amazing array of unique things to do beyond the slopes. Here are some of the great reasons to visit right now:

BIG BANG FOR THE BUCK: Reno’s casinos and resorts have been raising the ante on the good times ever since Nevada legalized gambling in 1931. Games of chance are just part of the fun. Top-name entertainers perform at clubs throughout the city. Exceptional restaurants and posh hotels abound. The Peppermill Casino resort, just two miles from the heart of downtown, recently completed a \$400-million renovation that makes it among the state’s best lodging options. We’re talking high-end luxury. And the prices? You won’t believe the deals. Even would-be ski bums might consider commuting to Mt. Rose, just 20 fast-miles away (25 minutes). The more rarified peaks of Tahoe are a mere 50 miles from Reno’s bright lights and “big little city” vibe, making it more than possible to combine high-mountain powder with a dose of the high-life.

WESTERN WONDERS: Lots of western communities have rivers running through town. Reno does too. In fact it’s home to a very impressive whitewater park. Plenty of other old river cities offer the opportunity to step back in time. Reno’s no slouch in that department, either. In addition to a mid-20th century downtown with a film-noir sensibility, Reno is just a half hour from Virginia City, site of the famous Comstock Lode. The old mining town is among the nation’s largest National Historic Landmarks and also one of the most threatened. History buffs will nonetheless find much to appreciate amid its deserted structures.



MATCHLESS MARVELS: Besides fulfilling every expected Western vacation adventure, Reno offers attractions found nowhere else on the planet. Consider the National Automobile Museum built around Bill Harrah’s collection. Hailed as one of the world’s finest compendiums of car-stars, it includes vehicles notable for their place in history, such as a rare 1913 Pierce Arrow, a Stutz Bearcat and a Stanley Steamer. Others merit attention based on their owners. This is the home of Elvis’s custom caddy coupe, Lana Turner’s convertible and John Wayne’s corvette. Speaking of movie stars, Reno is also home to the “the Taj Mahal of Ten Pins”—the 78-lane, 363,000 square-foot National Bowling Stadium. If you loved Woody Harrelson’s *Kingpin*, a visit here is a must. This pin palace was featured in the film.

HIGH-BROW CULTURE: The presence of the University of Nevada, Reno adds yet another dimension to Reno’s ambience. The school’s Nightingale Concert Hall hosts a full roster of performances. Its Sheppard Fine Arts Gallery presents progressive exhibitions by local, national and international artists. Beyond the university campus, the Nevada Museum of Art is the state’s preeminent art museum. It boasts an impressive collection of nearly 2,000 works and also attracts impressive traveling shows and exhibitions. Guided tours and related programs and events offer extra insight into the artists and their work. ■