

MODESTO, CA | KLAMATH, OR | REDDING, CA | RIVERS, RANCHES AND FISHING

# SkyWest

magazine

PRICELESS: PLEASE TAKE ONE  
MARCH | APRIL 2011

St. George, Utah  
COLOR COUNTRY

 UNITED EXPRESS  
OPERATED BY SKYWEST AIRLINES

# St. George, Utah



## Utah's Color Country Made Easy

by Amanda Bjerke

St. George, Utah, one of the country's best-kept vacation secrets, has more golf courses per capita than any other sunbelt locale (including Scottsdale). It offers convenient access to more national parks and monuments than any other American town. Home to destination spas and resorts, St. George boasts an intriguing history *and* it's located smack dab in the middle of Utah's red-rock Color Country, which means it's beyond pretty. Now for the really good stuff, a new airport opened earlier this year so it is more effortless than ever to access this spectacular place.

The \$159-million, state of the art, St. George Municipal Airport is five times the size of its predecessor and sprawls across 1,200 acres. Now, SkyWest Airlines, the sole provider to its hometown, is also bringing Bombardier Canadair Regional Jets and non-stop service to Los Angeles to the facility. With an eye to the future, the new airport accommodates more passengers than ever before and is expected to serve the area's increasing demand for a century to come.



Local watercolorist Roland Lee, the recently appointed chairman of the Zion National Park Natural History Association, leads an organization dedicated to enhancing the visitors' park experience. He said, "The new airport facility is absolutely beautiful. The interior design reflects the feeling you get when you travel through a canyon. And it is certainly able to accommodate us now and will also serve us for the long term. It will make it easier for more people to share in all that we enjoy."



St. George Municipal Airport

Zion, Utah's most popular national park, attracts approximately 2.7-million visitors a year. They come from across the globe to hike, mountain bike and bask in scenic wonders. Many fly to Las Vegas or Salt Lake City. The new St. George Airport is just 45 miles away from the park's entrance. Lee said, "Being able to accommodate the larger planes makes it easier for people from all over the world to fly directly into St. George and get closer to the parks."

Lee, who is also the artist responsible for this edition's cover, explained that "From St. George it is a straight shot to Zion. From there it's just an hour to Bryce Canyon National Park. It is also less than two hours to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. All those natural wonders are within a little circle and very accessible. We are also close to Cedar Breaks National Monument and Pipe Spring National Monument in Arizona. It's easy to visit three national



parks in three days if you have limited time. Hopefully, folks can stay longer because it's easy to spend at least three days just in Zion."

The artist went on to say that he has spent almost 40 years becoming acquainted with the park. Its location, at the convergence of the Colorado Plateau, Great Basin and Mojave Desert, makes for a grand diversity of geography, scenery and plant and animal life. Exploring the park's massive rock formations, steep canyon faces and soaring monoliths can readily be a life-long pursuit. Those on a strict schedule will want to pick up a map at the visitor center, drive the recommended route and stop at landmarks such as Angel's Landing. To really experience the essence of this place, get off the main road and take a hike through the Virgin River Narrows. The river's rushing waters carved this canyon eons ago. The dramatic spires and arches resulted from uplifted and eroded sedimentary rock. A hike through the Virgin Narrows riverbed puts you in touch with that ancient process as the pathway sluices its way between mile-high canyon walls. Adaptable to most skill levels, it's considered one of the best canyon hikes in the world. Local outfitters are available for those unwilling to go it alone.

After a day slogging through the canyon, St. George offers an array of comfortable lodging, including the historic Seven Wives Bed and Breakfast Inn. Several spa-centric resorts are located nearby. The area is peppered with dining options. The upscale Painted Pony gets raves for fresh ingredients and an innovative menu. The town is also chock-a-block with down-home-style cafés. Much of St. George's overall appeal is its small-city



Interior of the new St. George Municipal Airport

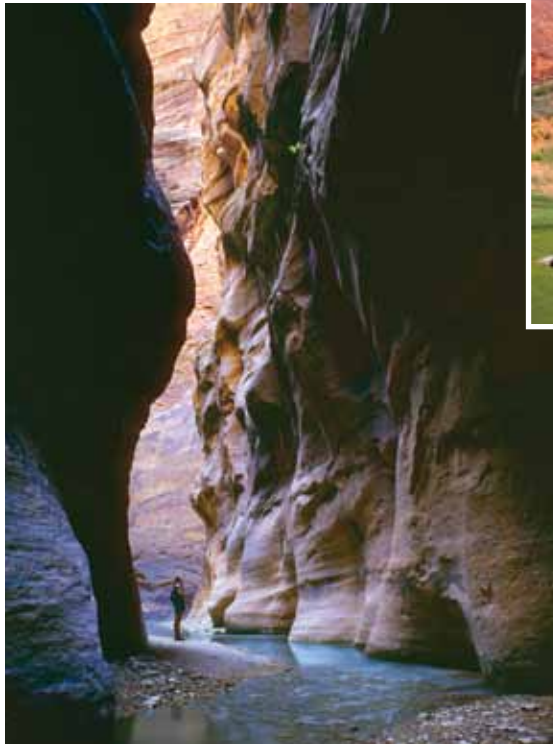


friendliness. Locals—old-timers and newcomers alike—pride themselves on neighborliness. It's ingrained in local tradition. St. George was settled by Mormon pioneers in the midst of the U.S. Civil War. Church leader Brigham Young dispatched pioneer George Smith to Utah's desert with the hopes of growing and selling enough cotton to meet the demand once filled by America's southern states.

The project failed, but the Mormons persevered. Smith, known as "St. George" to church members lent his name to the town. Brigham Young became St. George's first snowbird in 1873. His winter home, at the corner of 200 North and 100 West is among historic sites on a downtown walking tour. The Brigham Young Winter Home opens daily at 9 a.m. Closing hours vary by season.

Not that there is ever an "off-season." Winters are temperate. Summers hot. Spring and fall delightful. Local golfers enjoy more than 275 playable days every year and you can, too. Of the ten local golf clubs, only one is private. All St. George visitors are welcome to explore plenty of options, including four world-class courses—Southgate, St. George, Dixie Red Hills Golf Course and Sunbrook, rated by *Golf Digest* as Utah's finest. But the best thing about golfing in St. George isn't the plethora of choice; it's the scenery. Here, players tee off in the shadows of high canyon bluffs that dazzle in shades of orange-red against a cerulean sky. A wide expanse of desert flora unfolds around the courses, offering a breath-taking view of sandstone canyons and mint-hued sagebrush.

This place is so lovely and the recreation so amazing, plan your St. George itinerary soon. Before long, the word will be out. ■



## Mark The Calendar

Even the arts benefit from St. George's colorful location. The Tuacahn outdoor amphitheater presents a lineup of top stars and big productions in a stunning setting. This year's concert series kicks off with Bill Cosby, March 11, and includes the Lettermen, Eddie Money, REO Speedwagon, Air Supply, Lonestar, Don McLean and Sinbad. June launches the theater season. Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and *Grease* alternate nightly into October with the exception of Sundays when the theater is dark. (That's just showbiz lingo. This stage is always lit by star shine.)



far left: St. George Municipal Airport  
left: Orderville Canyon  
above: The Ledges of St. George golf course



ORDERVILLE CANYON: DAVID PETTIT

LEDGES GOLFER: KEVIN LEWIS

ST. GEORGE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT: DAVE BECKER



## Roland Lee's Pastoral *A Patch of Blue*

Southern Utah's majestic landscape lured Roland Lee from California more than 30 years ago. Since then the former ad agency illustrator and art professor has earned a reputation as one of the most significant painters of Utah's vivid landscape. Transparent watercolor is his specialty, Zion National Park his favorite subject.

"Our family has a cabin on the east boundary of Zion. We bought a little five-acre parcel right after we moved from Los Angeles. So I spend a lot of time hiking in the park," he said explaining that the painting on this edition's cover, *A Patch of Blue*, captures a peaceful time along the North Fork of the Virgin River. "At times it can be a very turbulent river that roils through there. That is how the canyon was carved, but it can also be a very passive river. That's what I wanted to capture—the peaceful water reflecting those brilliant red cliffs and the blue skies. It's a place I enjoy."

Like all of Lee's work the 21" x 29" painting evokes strong feelings. "Art is always about human emotion," he said. "I do not try to replicate or document an actual scene. I try to relate what I experienced while there."

To facilitate his work, Lee records images via a sketchbook and pocket camera. He also does small paintings on location. "I never paint a place I've never seen, but I never paint directly from a photo either. I use photos and sketches for reference and rely on my emotions. In the studio I work to enhance the colors to capture the mood. My work isn't about how high the mountain or how wide the river. It's about the feeling—the cool air and the warm sun bouncing off the rocks, the way it all affects the senses. That's what I try to present."

Lee has traveled the world, capturing the essence of landscapes from Europe to the South Pacific, yet St. George remains his favorite destination. "I've been to lots of countries, but I enjoy being here as much as any place," he said. ■

## ZION NATIONAL PARK



Two hours north and a million miles away from Las Vegas, this National Park will amaze and inspire you! Take advantage of hiking and biking trails, horseback riding, jeep tours, rappelling, atv excursions & more. Don't forget the camera!

## ST. GEORGE EVERYTHING FROM A TO ZION

Play the  
new  
Kokopelli  
Course!



A year round golf destination that has lots of options for every golfer's skill level, schedule and pocketbook! Ten conveniently located courses and multiple lodging options. Book up to six months out with no fees at [RedRockGolf.com](http://RedRockGolf.com).

Fly direct into St. George from  
Los Angeles or Salt Lake City!

[AtoZion.com](http://AtoZion.com)