

TRAVEL

TODAY'S QUOTE

"In the magnificent fierce morning of New Mexico one sprang awake, a new part of the soul woke up suddenly, and the old world gave way to a new." — **Novelist D.H. Lawrence**

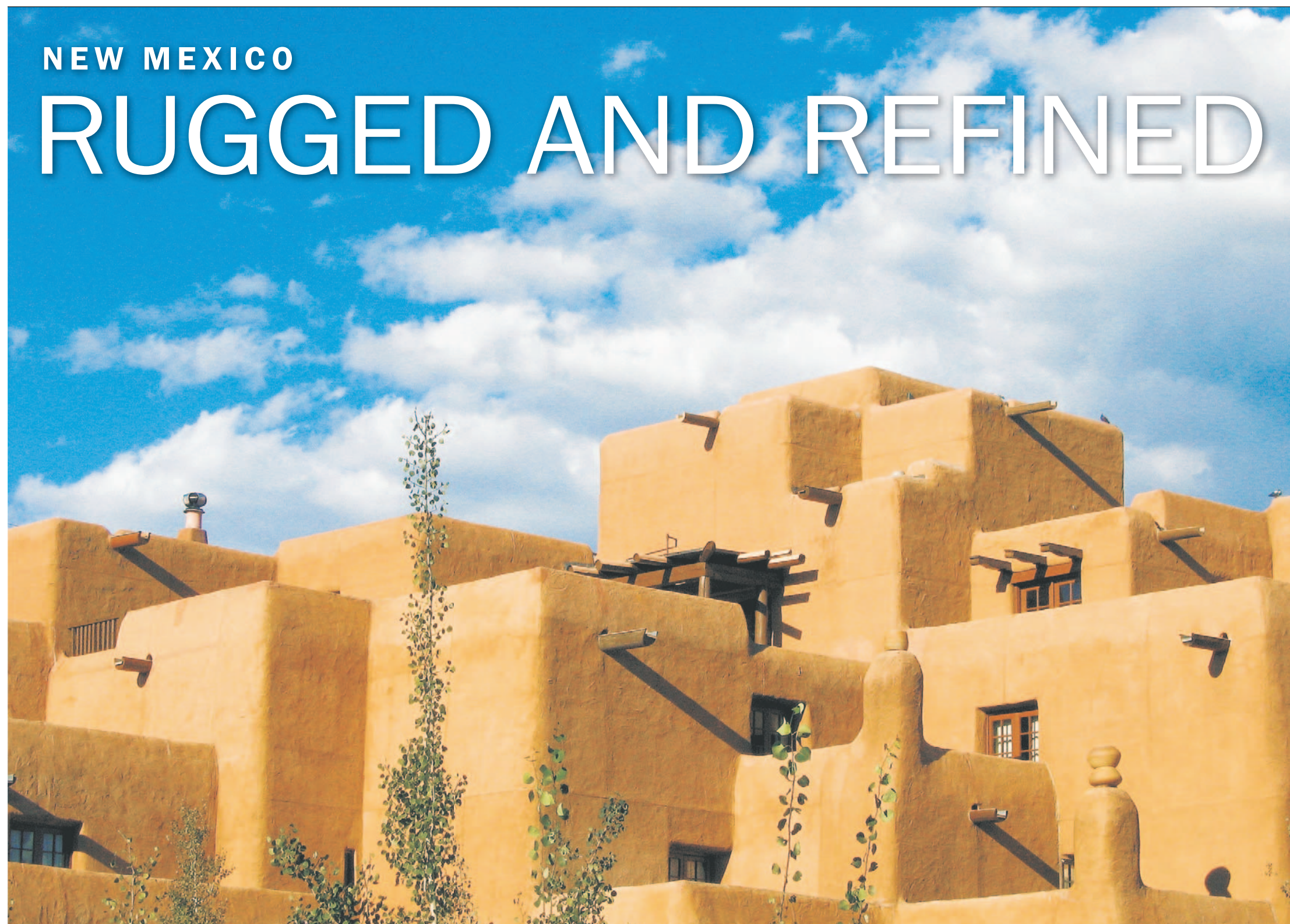
COMING NEXT WEEK

Fall Color: Where and when to find autumn's blaze of glory.



SUNDAY

September 4, 2005



NEW MEXICO

RUGGED AND REFINED

The Inn at Loretto, a block from the Santa Fe Plaza, was built in 1975 to resemble Taos Pueblo; Santa Fe's building code requires new buildings to maintain the city's unique architectural style, a combination of Indian and Spanish colonial influences.

SANTA FE: One of America's oldest cities has an ongoing battle between its tourist veneer and its venerable core. In ways large and small, our correspondent finds the substance beneath the style.

By **Chris Welsch**, *Star Tribune Staff Writer*

I woke up in an old adobe inn where at various times Ansel Adams, D.H. Lawrence and Edna St. Vincent Millay had slept. They'd probably stared at the same ceiling of ancient pine logs anchored in red mud and had no doubt been charmed too. * From the historic pictures displayed at the Inn of the Turquoise Bear, not much had changed since the building was owned by Witter Bynner, friend of some of America's finest artists and writers. Then as now, beautiful wool rugs and eclectic art from all over the world adorned the walls. * After breakfast, I walked down the Old Santa Fe Trail toward the plaza. New Mexico's beauty is not subtle. It hits you over the head like a hammer. The sky was a shade of blue so deep and luminous that it seemed to pull my soul to the surface of my skin. At an altitude of 7,000 feet, the sunlight is utterly unhindered by humidity, providing a clarity and sharpness to everything. The trees throw shadows on the ground that are as black as ink. * A block from the plaza, I came across a white Dodge van with a uniquely Santa Fean load. The roof rack bore two dozen freshly bleached cow skulls, and the trailer behind was loaded with as many newly minted pueblo ladders. Nice little Georgia O'Keeffe touches for any new home, which according to the building code have to look like adobe, even if they aren't. * I had my doubts about returning to Santa Fe. I was there for the first time when I was 6 years old, in 1969. My uncle had married the daughter of a local rancher. It was a formative travel experience. I heard Spanish spoken for the first time, rode my first horse and reveled in flavors from exotic foods such as green chile and cinnamon-sugared sopapillas.

Santa Fe continues on G4



Above: Isabel Naranjo of Chimayo, N.M., sells flowers at the Santa Fe Farmers Market. The market allows only local producers who sell their own wares.



In a souvenir shop just off the plaza, Day of the Dead puppets cast shadows on an adobe wall.



After chiles are harvested, just about every Santa Fe doorway sports a ristra, or string of peppers. They reputedly bring good luck as well as good spice.



Troy Melhus/Star Tribune

Northern New Mexico boasts dozens of challenging mountain bike trails like this one, west of Taos, for everyone from the beginner to expert.

TAOS: Encounters with the land (away from land-seeking investors) by bike.

By **Troy Melhus**, *Star Tribune Staff Writer*

The heavens look different from Taos. Peer up on a clear, cloudless midnight, and the galaxies aren't just boundless, they're mystical.

The same might be said for the biking trails. I'd come looking for something new. After spending four days mountain biking near Denver, I wanted to return to my birth state and re-explore the Sangre de Cristo range of mountains near Taos, north of Santa Fe. Armed with a book called "Mountain Biking in Northern New Mexico," I picked about a half-dozen trails that I thought worth riding, and figured I'd deal with lodging when the need arose.

I pulled into town shortly after sunset, rented a room at the Casa Benavides bed-and-breakfast, and within an hour was walking the streets of Taos, gazing up at a full moon and stars, and drinking in the place: its churches, its tourist shops, its pubs, its solace. Part hippy, part Hollywood, Taos combines the feel of an artist colony, a tourist destination, a haunting, Stephen King-esque middle-of-nowhere overnight stop, and a westward rush for land investors all in one.

TAOS continues on G4

