

BEST EATS ISSUE

JUNE 2011

New Mexico MAGAZINE

RED OR GREEN?

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DESTINATION: DELICIOUS

10 DISHES YOU'LL LOVE

AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

BURRITO, CARNE ADOVADA, ENCHILADAS, STUFFED SOPAIPILLA, GREEN-CHILE CHEESEBURGER . . .

HOT, HOT, HOT

SALSA OF THE YEAR

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FRUIT SALSA RECIPES

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ALAN ARKIN'S NEW BOOK

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3 WOMEN WHO SHAPED THE WEST

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Going Places

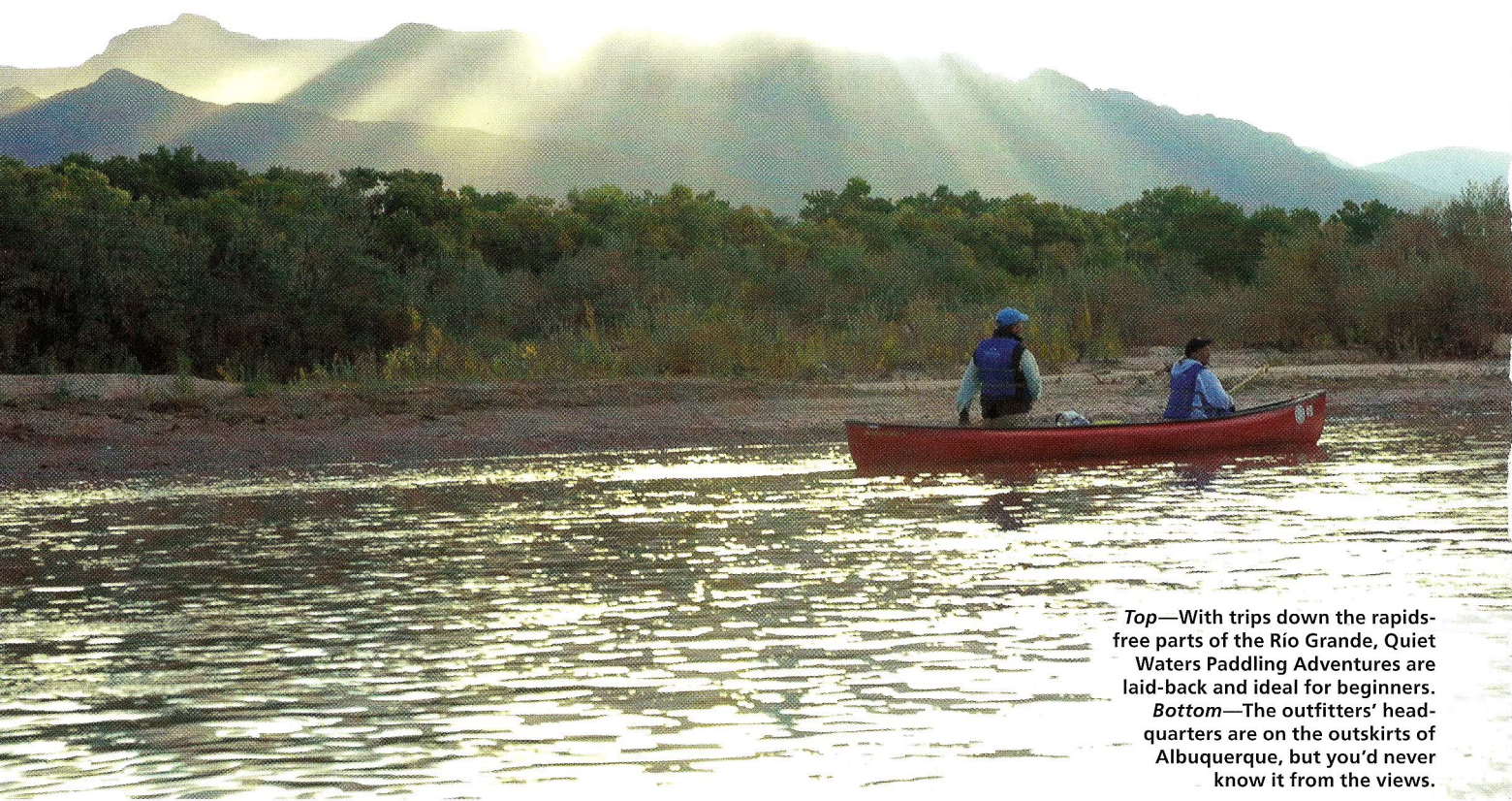
■ OUTINGS ■ SHOPPING ■ DINING ■ LODGING ■ PEOPLE



Slow Ride

Find tranquility with Quiet Waters Paddling Adventures, who offer excursions down the calmer stretches of the Rio Grande. Read more in "Big River" (page 12).

PHOTO BY LESLEY S. KING



Top—With trips down the rapids-free parts of the Río Grande, Quiet Waters Paddling Adventures are laid-back and ideal for beginners. **Bottom**—The outfitters' headquarters are on the outskirts of Albuquerque, but you'd never know it from the views.

THE GOOD LIFE: BERNALILLO

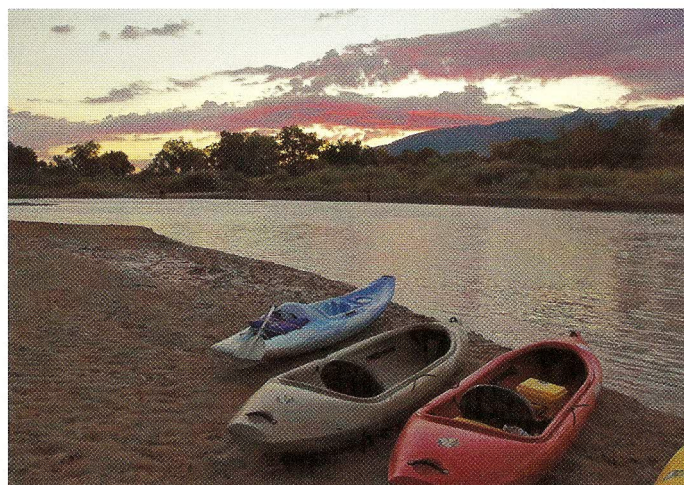
Big River

OVER THE YEARS, I've been fortunate to experience the Río Grande's many moods. I've kayaked the notorious Taos Box, negotiating miles of treacherous obstacles. South of there, near the village of Pilar, I've played for hours on the quickly moving Racecourse, bucking in and out of holes and surfing waves. And I've paddled calmer stretches of water farther downstream, where the river widens near Española.

But a recent river trip through Albuquerque now rates as my favorite. **Quiet Waters Paddling Adventures**, based in Bernalillo (population 9,000, about 15 miles north of Albuquerque), runs trips from various starting points nearby. All are on Class I water—no rapids—so they're ideal for families and novices. Yet the trips are full of excitement.

As the sun rises over the Sandía Mountains, we convene on a sandbar in Corrales, a rural village of about 7,000 on the Río Grande, only a few miles from Bernalillo. Quiet Waters supplies our gear—all I need are warm clothes and a little courage. After a brief safety talk, in which we learn about hazards such as sweepers and strainers (respectively, low-hanging or submerged trees), we climb into open-topped kayaks and canoes and shove off. The water is sweet, a cottonwood-shaded flow that arcs around long bows.

The air smells dewy. Just a few miles away, highways buzz with thousands of people commuting to Albuquerque on this weekday morning, but here, our little water world is quiet. We float along



PHOTOS BY LESLEY S. KING

for three hours, the guide occasionally pointing out river nuances, while the day continually offers up new discoveries. A blue heron takes flight from the water; a kayaker gets stuck on a sandbar (well, that happens more than once); and a riffle of white water makes us giggle.

I hear a goose call, then another. Suddenly, a whole flock lifts off to fly along above us. Then, an even more brilliant sight: We round a bend and there, against the sapphire sky, floats a cluster of hot-air balloons. It's a perfect morning on the Great River.

From \$45 per person; 105D Pleasant View Dr., Bernalillo, (877) 453-5628, (505) 771-1234, www.quietwaterspaddling.com —Lesley S. King