

little BITS

■ SPIRIT RIDGE

Suites and villas, all with full kitchens, range from \$159 to \$389 per night, depending on the size and the time of year. For more information, visit www.spiritridge.ca or call 877-313-9463

■ CULTURAL CENTRE

Admission to the NK' Mip Desert Cultural Centre is \$12 for adults, \$11 for seniors and students, \$8 for children aged five to 17, and \$36 for families. For more information, visit www.nkmipdesert.com.



get outta here and travel

B.C.'s delectable desert

It's pouring in Vancouver, but just five hours' drive away I'm sitting by the poolside along with a dozen other guests of Spirit Ridge Resort & Spa in Osoyoos, Canada's only desert.

Here, the weather is a balmy 25 degrees with just a slight spring breeze. Bikinis and books are the order of the day, though it's easy to get distracted by the view. Before us, the neat lines of a vineyard stretch for miles to Lake Osoyoos, while the arid mountains form a protective circle around this small town of 4,200 people.

Here, cactus plants grow in abundance, shaggy-maned Bighorn sheep graze on the steep mountain slopes, and the sky is that perfect shade of blue that convinces you that summer is tangible. Pleasure craft zoom around the perimeter of the Okanagan's warmest lake, and it's hard to banish a smile as the thought of the rainy Lower Mainland crosses your mind.

Spirit Ridge Resort opened last year on land owned by the NK' Mip, one of the Osoyoos First Nation's five tribes. The 130-roomed property



- Photo courtesy Spirit Ridge

The desert sunsets are spectacular, highlighting the shades of the region.

has the architecture and feel of a New Mexico-style establishment, its buildings constructed in rectangular blocks and coloured in earthy tones, offering large verandas and a perfect vantage point overlooking the vineyards, mountains and lake.

The resort is steps away from the NK' Mip Desert Cultural Centre that plays a fundamental role in celebrating the culture, heritage and future of the Osoyoos Indian Band, and in reaffirming its members' sense of identity.

A delectable way to end the experience is to dine at Passatempo, the resort's restaurant, and to visit the NK' Mip Cellars, where guests delight in the flavours of pinot noir, meritage and ice wine, and treat themselves to a meal on the terrace embraced by the hot desert air. Before them, the vineyards stretch to the lake, their sun-dappled plants eventually surrendering to the shadow of the mountain as day turns to dusk.

- Lauren Kramer, www.travelwriterstales.com

The Secret

Beyond The Law Of Attraction

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March 29, 2008
Holiday Inn on W. Broadway
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Seating is limited so register today.
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 Tickets are also on sale for April 12 event.

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