

NEW LEASE ON LIFE

TEXT BY DALIAH SINGER



Venerable motels transformed into boutique accommodations

Forget the old, stodgy motels of the last century. These roadside destinations are being reimagined as boutique, yet still affordable, accommodations. Here are nine of our favorites across Colorado.



All Inn Hotel, Denver

The four-story property at the corner of East Colfax Avenue and Milwaukee Street has been reinvented into a mid-century modern boutique hotel with 54 rooms, a cozy lobby with terrazzo floors and, soon, a relaxing wine garden out back. Originally built in 1959, the property stays true to the era with vintage bar carts in each of the three suites, earthy hues that change depending on the floor and a menu of classic cocktails suited for the “Mad Men” era.

While you're there: Belly up to the curved bar at Fino, the Mediterranean-inspired lobby restaurant, for one of the best margaritas in town (courtesy of hospitality vet Steven Waters) and shareable items such as anchovy toast.

Amigo Motor Lodge, Salida

Minimalist Southwestern chic is the best way to describe this redone 1958 motor lodge just off U.S. 50. Each of the 17 queen and king rooms has a slightly different aesthetic, but expect modern comforts such as Tuft & Needle mattresses and Malin+Goetz bath products. Adventure travelers will love the outdoor hot tub, dog-friendly rooms and option to stay in one of the vintage Airstream trailers.

While you're there: In the colder months, steer toward Monarch Mountain, which debuted 377 acres of lift-served terrain with its No Name Basin expansion in January. In the summer, rafting the Arkansas River is a must.

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La Vista Motel, Denver

One of East Colfax Avenue's famed neon signs is shining bright once again: the 1956 property — which was recently added to the National Register of Historic Places — and its 23 rooms were restored with a nod to the 1960s (antique furniture, tiled bathrooms in pastel hues) alongside modern amenities and artistic flourishes, including colorful, handwoven alpaca blankets on every bed and an exterior mural by Denver artist Emma Friday.

While you're there: Retreat to Grandma's Basement, the wood-paneled downstairs lounge at El Piñon, the on-site café and bar, to listen to vinyl with a martini in hand.

Mellow Moon, Del Norte

From abandoned, 1940s-era motor lodge to 15-room, modern motel, Mellow Moon is a place where locals gather as often as those just passing through the San Luis Valley. The contemporary Americana vibe invites lounging with organic linens, patterned bathrobes, custom furnishings that differ from room to room, southwest-inspired textiles and locally sourced amenities (including an on-site mercantile).

While you're there: Lunar Lounge, the property's coffee shop and "bake house" (grab a doughnut if you're visiting on the weekend), provides the necessary fuel for a day trip to Wolf Creek Ski Area or Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve.

Mesa Verde Motel, Mancos

Cowboy core is brought to beautiful, quirky life at this Mancos rest stop. The 16 ground-level rooms (ranging from doubles to a family suite) are light and bright and accented by hand-painted murals. Lean into the fun by booking Room 13, a galaxy-themed king room with out-of-this-world decor. A coffee shop and cocktail lounge keep guests hydrated.

While you're there: Visit the cliff dwellings for which the region is known: the motel sits seven miles from Mesa Verde National Park. Or drive an hour southwest to stand in multiple states at once at Four Corners Monument.

The Nightingale Motel, Pagosa Springs

Standing since 1898, The Nightingale Motel has finally been brought into the 21st century. Each of the 17 modest rooms is inviting without being fussy, and the wood-paneled Cabin Suite feels particularly mountain-esque. Pour-over coffee stations come standard so you can prepare for a day of exploring. In the evening, visit The Neon Mallard Cocktail Lounge for creative drinks and a limited selection of bites.

While you're there: Soak in the soothing, mineral-rich waters that give the town its name with a day pass to the recently expanded Springs Resort.

Spoke And Vine, Palisade

Explore Colorado wine country to the max, then sleep it off in the comfortable confines of Spoke and Vine, a low-key, pet-friendly accommodation originally built in 1955. We love the complimentary breakfast delivery, cycling-themed decor, spacious bathrooms in all 17 rooms and local tipples available at the Motel Bar.

While you're there: Mountain bikers have plenty of singletrack to explore, but Colorado National Monument is just as appealing for those who are more interested in driving. For a taste of Western Colorado grapes, don't miss Ordinary Fellow, from award-winning winemaker Ben Parsons.



The Timberline, Leadville

Situated in the historic heart of Leadville, The Timberline was refurbished in 2021 to serve as a true base camp for the many adventurers who visit the high-elevation town. All of the king and double-queen rooms are pet-friendly; Parachute bedding is a luxury for sore muscles; and there's an outdoor firepit with free s'mores. There are also four kitchenettes for those who want to do their own cooking and a three-bed, three-bath loft for larger groups.

While you're there: Plan ahead and book an appointment to shop the full selection of Melanzana's micro grid hoodies, which are produced in limited supply right in town.

Western Lodge, Steamboat Springs

One of the newer additions to the state's modern motel lineup (if a property from 1942 can be considered new in any way) is the completely remodeled Western Lodge. King and queen beds welcome singles, families and pups to downtown Steamboat with cowboy-themed art, a modest black-and-white palette and 35 comfortably appointed rooms.

While you're there: Spend a casual afternoon perusing the boutiques that pepper Main Street (aka Lincoln Avenue) before enjoying a soak at the expanded Old Town Hot Springs a few blocks down the road.



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