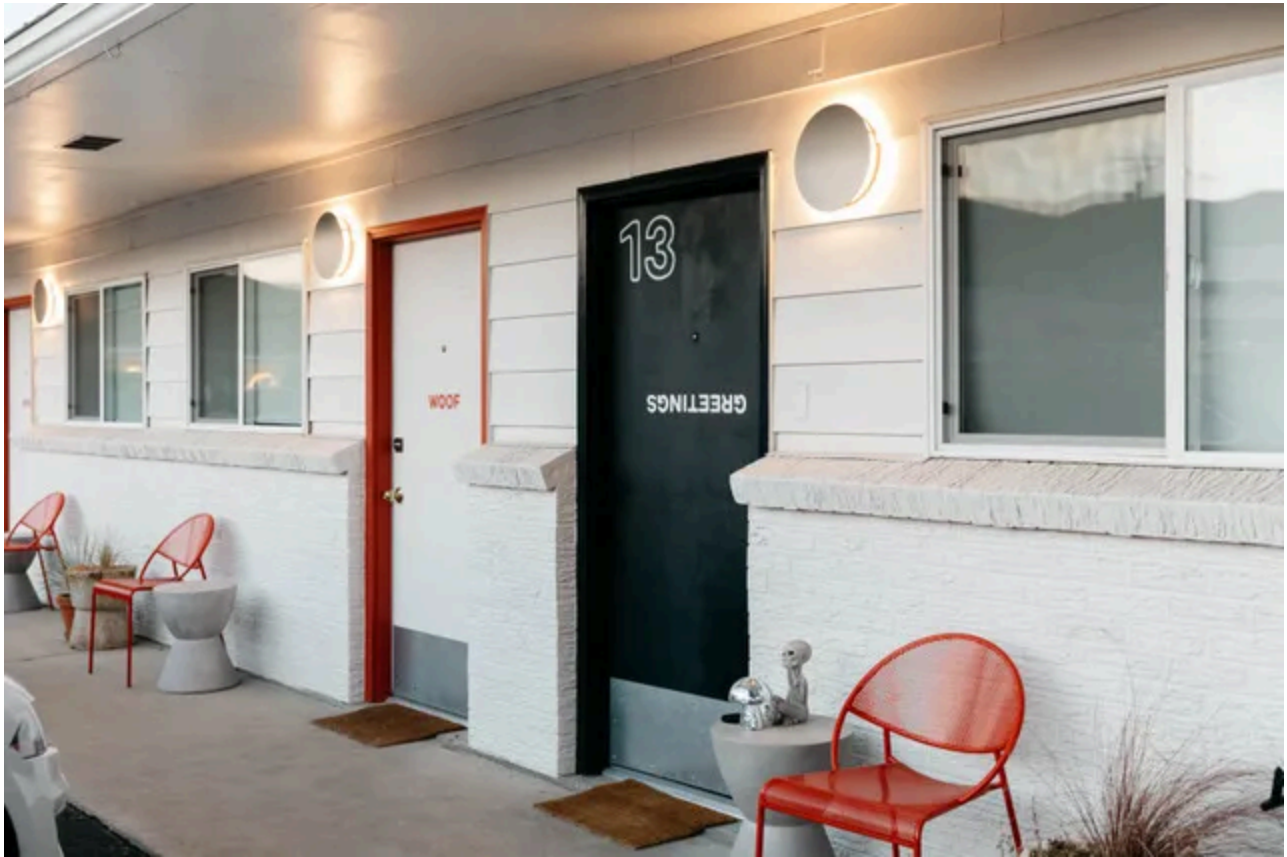


FLAVOR OF THE WEEK

A Mancos motel just kitschy enough



Room 13 at the Mesa Verde Motel in Mancos. The old motel was purchased and refurbished in 2021 by two Durango-based couples without any hospitality experience, but with a combined set of business skills that have won the motel a number of awards. (Marquel Patton, courtesy of Mesa Verde Motel)

A woman in a **wide-brimmed rancher hat** and a snake coiled on her arm greets us from behind the bed. She's one of the many motif-heavy murals at the **Mesa Verde Motel** in Mancos, designed by artist **Saint No** and painted by Durango-based muralist **Monica Louise Vick**.

On the walls opposite our personal Rattlesnake Kate: a sunrise, a scorpion and a teeny tiny cowboy riding a horse into the corner of the room. There are similarly deserty details all over this 1980s property with a 1950s vibe, from the color palette (cream, teal and blood orange) to the smell of the soaps (a locally sourced fragrance made just for the motel).

There's also lots of talk of aliens — the room key is fixed to a drawing of a three-eyed extraterrestrial in a cowboy hat, and there's the galaxy-themed Room 13, with a mysterious

black entrance and the word “GREETINGS” written upside down on the door.

The motel stops short of gimmicky, though, and is instead wholeheartedly charming.

It’s got the type of retro hipness that would fit right in on a street in Palm Springs, with enough small-town weird to keep it grounded firmly in the Four Corners. A welcome note lets visitors know that the roads in Mancos are made of dirt, so your car *will* get dirty, and that “it’s pronounced Main-Kiss.”

The property also has an old maintenance garage that’s been converted into a coffee shop/evening lounge, where they serve grab-and-go breakfast burritos (made with locally raised eggs), soft pretzels and coffee beans roasted down the road in Durango.

Main Street Mancos is just a couple blocks away, which meant pastries from **Moondog Cafe** and a (second) coffee from Fahrenheit Roasters fueled multiple slow walks through town during my weekend stay, during which I’d longingly gaze through the windows of the town’s galleries, bookshop and community printing press. Almost everything but the cafes was closed while I was there — most shops open at 11 a.m. and I’d planned to spend the daylight hours skiing Purgatory, about an hour away.

If you’re looking for a resting spot that’s a little bit outlaw and a little bit alien on your next road trip, keep an eye (or three) out for the blinking Mesa Verde Motel sign, just a few steps off Highway 160, where the asphalt turns to dirt.

Parker Yamasaki | Reporter

