

**See Inside** FOR OUR FREE ONBOARD ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

American Airlines 

# American Way

JULY 2020

RETRO WAVES

***Capturing  
the golden  
age of  
surfing***

Equestrian  
manager  
Caitie Hefner  
at Brush  
Creek Ranch  
in Saratoga,  
Wyoming

## Great Escapes

***Summer adventure  
across America***

STARRY  
NIGHTS

***Drive-in  
theaters  
make a  
comeback***





A slot canyon near Amangiri, one of the resorts featured in our cover story

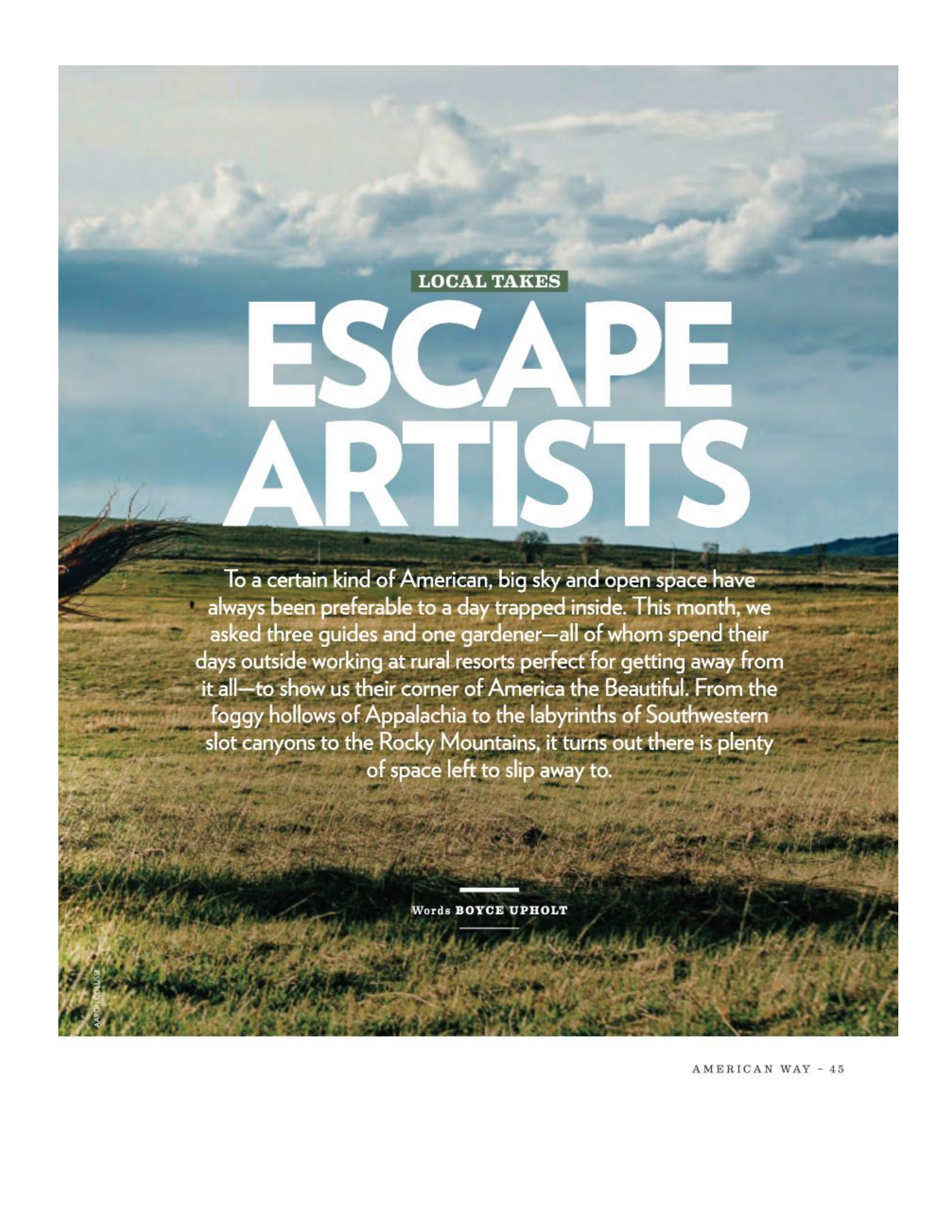
# July 2020

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**GREAT ESCAPES**  
Four notable locals, from a cowgirl to a beekeeper, show us their corners of America

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**A WAVE IN TIME**  
Pioneer surf photographer Jeff Divine's work explores the sport's most soulful era

COURTESY OF AMANGIRI



LOCAL TAKES

# ESCAPE ARTISTS

To a certain kind of American, big sky and open space have always been preferable to a day trapped inside. This month, we asked three guides and one gardener—all of whom spend their days outside working at rural resorts perfect for getting away from it all—to show us their corner of America the Beautiful. From the foggy hollows of Appalachia to the labyrinths of Southwestern slot canyons to the Rocky Mountains, it turns out there is plenty of space left to slip away to.

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Words **BOYCE UPHOLT**

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AARON COLUSE

## Kyle Davis

ADVENTURE GUIDE  
AMANGIRI  
CANYON POINT, UT

THE COLORADO RIVER'S PATH through southern Utah and northern Arizona remained unmapped by U.S. explorers until the late 19th century. There was too much steepness, too many trenches and slot canyons. Even today, guide Kyle Davis tends to repeat some variation of the phrase "hard to get to" when he talks about the spots he accesses with guests from the Amangiri resort.

Davis, whose father is half Navajo, grew up in **Page, Arizona**, a small town near the state's northern border that abuts the **Navajo Nation**, the country's largest indigenous territory. "We used to get in jeeps, and we'd just drive these dirt roads," he says. "This was before GPS, so the only way you knew where you were going is if your older brother or sister figured it out beforehand." They'd



Clockwise from above:  
Kyle Davis in his element; the nearby Horseshoe Bend on the Colorado River; Amangiri from above; bacon-wrapped wild boar loin with refried white beans, stone-fruit relish and grilled peaches, served at the property's restaurant; the view from an Amangiri suite

load up with gallons of water and blankets in case the jeep broke down. "Tell your parents where you're going, tell them when you're going to be back—hopefully don't mess it up."

Davis left those desert adventures for four years to study at Dartmouth College, returning in summers to work as a boating guide on the **Colorado River**. He studied neuroscience and psychology, contemplating a career in medicine, but decided he'd rather be outside. Fortunately, the year he graduated, 2009, a desert resort named **Amangiri** opened just 25 minutes from his hometown. Like all Aman Resorts, it offers a peaceful escape and attentive, customized service, while working to sustain local traditions.

Amangiri sits on 600 acres, surrounded by flat-topped mesas and within a day's trip of national parks such as **Grand Canyon, Zion** and **Bryce Canyon**. The architecture echoes the landscape: Elegant walkways wind like slot canyons, a pool wraps around a sandstone escarpment, and the color palette blends with the desert. This month, the property has opened its latest accommodations: **Camp Sarika**, where ten canvas-tented pavilions offer unobstructed desert views.



As a guide here, Davis leads guests to remote spots, some on the property, some at national parks, some in designated wilderness areas. “We’re getting permits for locations most people don’t even know exist, let alone have a car that would be capable enough to get them there,” he says. He recounts a recent ramble through **Coyote Buttes South**, where the rock formations, sculpted by wind, look like dollops of whipped cream frozen in place and painted pink. “There’s nothing else out there,” he says. “You climb on top of the rock and you can see 90 miles in any given direction.”

The resort, too, has its own gravitas. A cave, visible from the front windows, contains 9,000-year-old petroglyphs—a visceral connection to the region’s long indigenous history. Amangiri also brings clients into the **Monument Valley Tribal Park**, and Navajo hoop dancers and storytellers visit the lodge, where the culinary program emphasizes local game alongside indigenous traditions such as the Three Sisters—corn, beans and squash grown together to help sustain soils.

“My father would always tell me [that my Navajo ancestors] were not big warriors,” Davis says, “but we knew the landscape. We knew the canyons. We knew the rivers.



We knew the places to get water, the places to stay warm.” And now Davis knows those secrets, too: He drops offhand references to the region’s “cryptobiotic soils”—which, full of unseen algae and fungi, help hold the landscape in place. He mentions how the wonderful range of hues on the rock formations are due to varying rates of iron oxidation, and is well versed in the millions of years of geology and thousands of years of human culture that have created this distinct place. Part of his job, he says, is sharing his love of his home, this outdoor world.

Not that it requires much explaining. Once you get to some of the spots Davis recommends and you take in the view, there isn’t much to say. “If anything, I’m a glorified map,” Davis says. “I showed you where to go, I walked in front of you. But I didn’t build that rock, I didn’t make that river. That living world gets reflected in a person, and shapes their lives moving forward.” >

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COURTESY OF AMANGIRI

