

Georgia O'Keeffe and the Ghost Ranch Landscape Tour

"When I got to New Mexico, that was mine."

In this way Georgia O'Keeffe described her instant love for northern New Mexico, a love that lasted the rest of her life. The time was 1917, the event was a trip O'Keeffe and her sister Claudia took to New Mexico and Colorado from their home in Canyon, Texas. Yet it was 12 years before O'Keeffe returned to New Mexico and even longer before she found her way into the beautiful valley that would eventually become her summer home.

Although she never owned Ghost Ranch, she would eventually purchase a small home from Arthur Pack and later a home in Abiquiu (see below) She spent many years exploring and painting the Ghost Ranch environs.

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PLEASE NOTE: O'Keeffe Tours have started again for the season, which runs through mid-November.

Tour the landscape of Ghost Ranch and see through your own eyes the scenes and actual locations of Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings. The shining red and yellow cliffs of the Piedra Lumre, the black trails of waterfalls against canyon walls, and her beloved Pedernal Mountain... interwoven with stories of her fifty years at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu.

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Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

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The Landscape tour is approximately one hour long and the cost is \$25 per person.

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Reservations are required. Call 505.685.4333 ext.0

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Fees are not refundable and but can be used to rescheduled for up to a year from the day of the tour scheduled.

O'Keeffe History

In 1929 O'Keeffe went to Taos at the invitation of friends Dorothy Brett and Mabel Dodge Luhan. There she heard of

Ghost Ranch and once even caught a tantalizing glimpse of it from a high plain. In 1934 she finally found the ranch but was dismayed to learn that it was a dude ranch owned by Arthur Pack and Carol Stanley. However, a place was available for her that night in Ghost House and she spent the entire summer at the ranch.

That established a pattern she would follow for years, summers at Ghost Ranch exploring on foot and on canvas the beauty of the place, winters in New York. Because she was basically a "loner," she soon sought Ghost Ranch housing that was somewhat isolated from the headquarters area. Pack offered to rent her his own residence called Rancho de los Burros; this suited her very well. One spring she arrived unexpectedly and found someone else in the house. She demanded to know what those people were doing in her house. When Pack pointed out that it wasn't her house, she insisted that he sell it to her. Thus, in 1940, she became the owner of a very small piece of Ghost Ranch land: a house and seven acres. (In later years she told a ranch employee doing roadwork near her home, "I wanted enough land to keep a horse - all Arthur would sell me was enough for my sewer!")

But Rancho de los Burros was a summer place and also a desert one. O'Keeffe wanted a garden and a winter home. Eventually, she bought three acres in the village of Abiquiu. She spent three years remodeling and rebuilding the crumbling adobes before the place was fit for human habitation. After her husband, Alfred Stieglitz, died, O'Keeffe left New York to make Abiquiu her permanent home.

In 1955 Arthur and Phoebe Pack gave Ghost Ranch to the Presbyterian Church. O'Keeffe was aghast. The Packs should have sold her the ranch, she thought, and besides, she never cared much for Presbyterians anyway. Her precious privacy would be gone. However, from the very beginning of this new relationship the Presbyterians respected and tried to preserve the privacy of their famous neighbor. Visitors were told, as they are today, that Rancho de los Burros was on private land with no public access. Gradually her fears were allayed and the relationship grew warmer. Office personnel sometimes did secretarial work for her; Ghost Ranch folks replaced the pump on her well. O'Keeffe became friendly enough with long-time ranch director Jim Hall and his wife Ruth to have Christmas dinner with them.

She made a money gift toward construction of the Hall's retirement home on the ranch. When fire destroyed the headquarters building in 1983, O'Keeffe immediately made a gift of \$50,000 and lent her name to a Challenge Fund for the Phoenix campaign which resulted in replacing the headquarters building and adding a Social Center and the Ruth Hall Museum of Paleontology.

During the last few years of her life O'Keeffe was unable to come to Ghost Ranch from Abiquiu. Eventually she moved to Santa Fe where she died in her 99th year, reclusive to the end. "I find people very difficult," she once said.

Ghost Ranch gave her the freedom to paint what she saw and felt. Knowledgeable visitors can look around and identify many of the scenes she painted. Red and gray hills like those across from the roadside park south of the ranch headquarters were frequent subjects. Kitchen Mesa at the upper end of the valley is an example of the red and yellow cliffs she painted many times. Pedernal, the flat-topped mountain to the south, was probably her favorite subject. "It's my private mountain," she frequently said. "God told me if I painted it often enough I could have it." And of course, the Ghost Ranch logo, used on everything from stationery to T-shirts, was adapted from an O'Keeffe drawing the artist had given to Arthur Pack in the 1930's.

A Century of O'Keeffe

1887 - Born November 15 near Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

1902 - Family moved to Williamsburg, Virginia.

1905 - Entered Art Institute of Chicago

1907 - Enrolled in Art Students League of New York

1912 - 1918 - Artist in New York: Exhibitions, flower paintings, city paintings; marriage to Stieglitz

1929 - First summer in New Mexico (Taos)

1934 - First summer at Ghost Ranch

1940 - Bought Rancho de los Burros from Arthur Pack at Ghost Ranch

1945 - Bought house in Abiquiu

1946 - Stieglitz died

1949 - Moved permanent residence to Abiquiu

1953 - Extensive world travel; recipient of awards and honors; continued exhibitions

1971 - Eyesight deterioration began

1976 - O'Keeffe's autobiographical picture book, Georgia O'Keeffe, published

1984 - Moved from Abiquiu to Santa Fe

1986 - Died March 6 in Santa Fe

Information designed and written by volunteers, Carol Mackey and Sylvia Deaver.