TRAVEL

The Broadmoor glows with holiday lights on a weekend escape to Colorado Springs, Colo.

By JAY JONES
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An ornate spiral staircase fit for royalty is a centerpiece of the lobby at The Broadmoor. The staircase was refurbished to commemorate the resort’s 100th anniversary this year. (Custom Creations Photography /The Broadmoor)
I came to Colorado Springs in search of echoes of Katharine Lee Bates, who, 125 years ago, wrote a poem there that became “America the Beautiful.” But the legacy of Spencer Penrose, I learned, loomed larger in “the Springs.” Penrose, who made his fortune in gold and copper, opened the Broadmoor hotel in 1918. The five-star lodging oozes opulence, a testament to his flamboyance and vision. The tab for two, excluding airfare and rental car: $386 for a night at the Broadmoor and $42 for dinner at Juniper Valley Ranch.
THE BED

The Broadmoor is the hands-down winner for luxury, but the Antlers is a pleasant, less-expensive alternative and played a role in Bates’ poem. In 1893 she wrote her now-famous lyrics in the original Antlers Hotel after a trip to the top of Pikes Peak. The hotel burned down five years later and was rebuilt. I found an intricate Lego model of its replacement, which was torn down in the ’60s, beside the gift shop. The hotel was rebuilt again and reopened in 1967.

THE MEAL

The 25-minute drive south to Juniper Valley Ranch is scenic as well as rewarding, thanks to bountiful dinners. In small rooms crammed with tables, guests choose from skillet-fried chicken (some of the best I’ve eaten) or baked ham served family-style with fixings such as biscuits with apple butter, okra casserole and riced potatoes with gravy. The $21 price ($10 for kids 12 and younger) includes a homemade dessert. Reservations are recommended.

THE FIND

The holidays at the Broadmoor are magical; the resort is illuminated by more than a million dazzling white lights. The hotel is celebrating its centennial with a $386-per-night room package, which includes a $60 breakfast credit each day, plus sparkling wine, candy and a book on the hotel’s history. That, of course, includes Spencer Penrose. You’ll marvel as you gaze at his colorful glass eye, placed next to one of his flasks in a curio cabinet off the lobby.

THE LESSON LEARNED

Bates rode a mule to the top of Pikes Peak. Later, the Pikes Peak Cog Railway ferried passengers to the 14,114-foot summit for more than a century. It closed in 2017, the equipment having “run its course,” its website says. Whether the train will operate again is in doubt. That leaves the Pikes Peak Highway as the only option. I drove it, but fit folks bike it. Van tours are also available.

The Broadmoor, 1 Lake Ave., Colorado Springs, Colo.; (719) 623-5112. Wheelchair