

# The BottomLine magazine

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## **The Golden Door Spa –**

**San Diego County’s -**

**Best-Kept Destination Spa Secret -**

**By Margie M. Palmer -**

One doesn't often think of San Marcos as a haven for relaxation and rejuvenation. It's a little bit farther out of the city, and there isn't much surrounding it – unless you count the mountains, rolling hills and quiet country-like streets.

Yet at the same time, it's because of that setting that Golden Door Spa founder Deborah Szekley stumbled upon brilliance when she decided to found a destination spa in that very location.

The Golden Door would be easy to miss if you didn't know to look for it. And in fact, its entrance is marked only by a single gateway. You will not find ostentatious signage; and the gateway to the grounds lacks over-the-top markers. Yet when one does stumble upon the doorway to paradise, you'll find yourself swept away into a land of far, far away, where cell phone reception is scant at best, and serenity abounds.

The grounds are extraordinary, to say the least – and were inspired by the ancient Japanese Honjin inns. All of the sculptures which are found peppered throughout the acreage were imported from Japan, and the ambiance was created with perfect feng shui.

Only 40 guests are afforded the ability to partake in the spa's myriad of services on any given week – and by week, they do mean week. Guests arrive and depart on consecutive Sundays, and during the span of that seven days they're able to take advantage of all the 'Door has to offer. (That includes two absolutely luxurious spa treatments per day, access to a 25-mile private trail system, fitness classes, and much, much more).

I recently had the privilege of being invited as a guest-for-a-day (yes, in fact, being a member of the media does have its privileges). And what I can tell you, is that despite my having only been there for three hours, by the time I departed I found myself feeling more relaxed and energized than I'd felt in months.

My visit began with a tour of the grounds – which include a four-acre organic vegetable garden (the products of which are used by their resident chef to prepare meals), a bamboo forest, labyrinth, coy pond, two swimming pools, tennis courts, a gym, and spaces for Pilates and Yoga. My hotel room was blissfully serene, and the spa treatment I received (an absolutely divine sea-salt exfoliation infused with essential oils) gave me the strongest, fuzzy-headed sense of spa-brain – which, was absolutely blissful, to say the least.

My dining companion and I enjoyed a lunch consisting of iced tea, miso soup, a Bento Box and Greek salad, and dessert came in the form of an array of fresh fruit – of which the berries were among the sweetest I've ever tasted.

All in all – the next time you find yourself itching to get away from your day-to-day, you needn't look far. Bliss, relaxation, and perhaps the world's most perfect getaway is practically located in your back yard.