

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO GAY TRAVEL

PASSPORT

GOLDEN DOOR ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA

This premiere luxury bootcamp is in a category all its own. At \$7,500 a week, it's not on everybody's short list for vacation options, but a week at "The Door" is a must at least once in your life. That the Door fosters guest loyalty is an understatement—for the vast majority of visitors it's an annual

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event and a highlight of the year. Only 40 guests are allowed at the spa at a time, and there are four staff for every guest. While service is exceptional, what sets the Door apart from other spas is its personalized and comprehensive approach to each individual. Included in the cost is an in-room massage every day, a facial every day, a personal trainer 4x/week, your personal laundry done every day, maid service 5x/day, and all gourmet low calorie meals and snacks. There's also yoga, tai chi, cardio boxing, swim clinics, circuit training, water aerobics, dance, tennis, running, weight training, and daily 6 A.M. hikes. The spa was built as a Japanese Inn, and the Japanese aesthetic and approach to relaxation is reflected throughout. Sliding shoji screen doors are meant to slow you down physically and emotionally, and as in life, there are no straight paths—winding stone walkways meander thoughtfully through impeccably manicured gardens. Koi nuzzle the surface of streams, mugging for attention against the tinkling splash of waterfalls. All guests arrive on Sunday and leave a week later, with no exceptions. This philosophy, espoused by founder Deborah Sekeleh, is to quickly make you feel at home with no reminders that you're traveling. Thus, you will never see luggage, bellmen, cash, credit cards, or new people coming and going. Favorite discoveries included supplied workout clothes (you don't need to bring your own), the group of friends I made there, the inch I lost off my waist, and more than anything, the profound feeling of peace, relaxation, and good health I felt at the end of the week. **www.goldendoor.com**

—Paul Horne