



Individual treatment bungalows surround the gardens of The Spa at Rancho Bernardo Inn.

Relaxation Retreat

In a bid to entice a travel-weary business clientele, a resort spa is embracing the wellness megatrend. *By Rachel Kossman*

In today's health-conscious, organic-obsessed society, consumers know all about healthful foods and healthful lifestyle choices. But what about healthful spas and resorts? With the addition of new Wellness Rooms and a fresh focus on hyper-local, natural spa treatments, Rancho Bernardo Inn in San Diego is striving to label itself just that.

Late last year, the sprawling Southern California resort—whose remodeled Spanish-style architecture offers a unique atmosphere that combines modern and mid-century “homey”—re-branded its Vista bungalow, which sits on a low hilltop overlooking the resort's spa gardens. The spacious Wellness Rooms

in the two-story building have been renovated to include whirlpool-style soaking tubs and balconies with views of the spa's pool and gardens.

The spaces are brimming with amenities for the relaxation-seeking visitor: a yoga mat and DVD, hand-poured lavender-scented soy candles, homemade body scrubs straight from the spa, plus Kerstin Florian bath products. Wellness guests also enjoy access to the spa pool and a discount on spa services.

“The Wellness Rooms were created to meet the demand for well-rounded, healthful hotels,” says Kate Santarsieri, spa director at The Spa at Rancho Bernardo Inn. “Many people are obliged to travel for



Views of the Rancho Bernardo Inn's spa gardens and pools induce serenity.

work in this day and age, and as a go-to hotel for travelers, both business and otherwise, it's within our control to help them stay well—mentally *and* physically—while on the road.”

Indeed, people attending group meetings and those on business trips make up nearly half of Rancho Bernardo's guests, which is why the wellness package is being billed as a unique enticement for worn and weary employees.

that gap.”

And there is plenty here to satisfy even the savviest, most demanding visitor. Down a charming stone path behind a heavy white door guests discover the resort's spa-like sanctuary, where they're encouraged to explore:

- luxurious relaxation rooms and lounges
- outdoor treatment bungalows overlooking a water feature and garden

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- a heated Jacuzzi with waterfall
- a eucalyptus steam room
- a saltwater lap pool
- several trellis-dotted spa gardens

Year-round, The Spa offers a rotating menu of Made Fresh Daily treatments, which make use of scrubs and creams incorporating local, organic ingredients. Clients top off their

Wellness Rooms come fully equipped for spa lovers.

80-minute body massage and wrap with a complementary beverage, and receive a “spa at home” recipe created by the resort’s culinary experts.

Fall’s “Hints of Harvest” Made Fresh Daily consisted of an apple cider sugar scrub and a ginger wrap,



plus a pumpkin peel hand treatment, and ended with a warming apple cider. Another previous offering, “Heaven & Hops,” showcased a crushed grapeseed and olive oil scrub and a barley and hops body wrap, and was followed by a glass of locally brewed craft stout. The spa’s current option, “Sugar & Spice”, includes a ginger-milk cream massage using hot stones and a persimmon and brown sugar body scrub. The treatment concludes with a steaming mug of orange dulce tea.

Such Made Fresh Daily scrubs are stocked in the facility’s Wellness Rooms, although the use of local ingredients is only one part of the Rancho Bernardo Inn’s mission to draw resort guests to the spa. Chef Tomas Baistrocchi, who helps the resort’s recently renovated AVANT restaurant and its new hands-on tasting kitchen, uses fresh, seasonal produce plucked from the property’s gardens. In addition to a long list of draft beers, the restaurant boasts another unique on-tap offering: house-made, seasonal mustard.

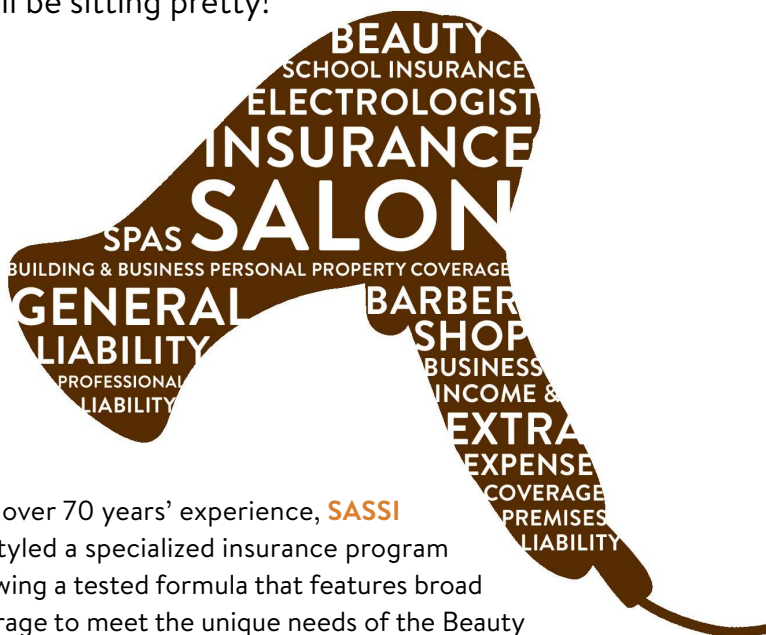
But whether it’s Southern California’s rich, indigenous resources enhancing its treatment menu or the locally harvested fare spicing up its meals, Rancho Bernardo Inn stands ready to serve up nirvana, San Diego-style.

Rachel Kossman is DAYSPA’s associate editor.

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