

## California Dreaming

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**Spa-goers get a taste of Pacific-style pampering with a visit to this sanctuary by the sea.**

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American Spa

Surrounded by lush botanical gardens and overlooking the Pacific Ocean, The Spa at Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara (CA) is an idyllic retreat that offers a taste of the California lifestyle. It is situated on what is commonly referred to as the American Riviera on account of the area's mild Mediterranean climate. Opened in 2002, the spa was part of a recent \$240 million restoration of the resort, which has experienced its fair share of highs and lows since it was first established in 1927. After falling on hard times during the Great Depression, the hotel made a comeback under new ownership and became a refuge for a host of Hollywood stars, such as Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, Bing Crosby, Ronald Reagan, Rock Hudson, and more. A quick getaway from L.A., the hotel today continues to attract Hollywood A-listers.



Guests can expect first-rate service, even while relaxing in the Jacuzzi.

A major highlight of the extensive renovation was the \$32 million spa, pool, and fitness center designed by renowned architect Peter Marino. Known as the "designer to the designers," Marino has worked on a variety of high-profile projects, including flagship stores for Armani, Chanel, Fendi, and Louis Vuitton. In creating a spa that would match the splendor and charm of the historic property, he created a 10,000-square-foot haven, complete with custom-designed tile fountains, hand-knotted silk rugs, and Venetian plaster walls. The spa features 11 treatment rooms, including four suites with fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, twin massage tables, steam showers, and private terraces with ocean views. Ideal for romantic spa getaways, one of the suites includes a tub for two. The pool is lined with handmade iridescent blue tiles that give it a dramatic shimmer in the sun. Owner Ty Warner designed the tiles as well as the elegant teak chaise lounges located around the pool.

In creating the menu, spa director Jaana Roth drew on the heritage of Santa Barbara's wine country to inspire a host of grape-themed treatments, such as the Chardonnay Clay Body Wrap (\$140, 50 minutes), the Grape Seed Geranium Rose Cocoon (\$140, 50 minutes), and the Vine Country "Cuvée" Soak (\$140, 50 minutes). Considering that the area's grape pursuits were lauded in the movie *Sideways*, it's no surprise that spa-goers can't wait to indulge in the spa's signature Grape De Vine (\$200, 80 minutes), which includes a Grape Seed Body Scrub and full-body massage using lavender essential oil.



The spa caters to couples with a variety of treatments and packages for two.

Skincare aficionados will want to time their visits carefully to correspond to when famed skincare expert Susan Ciminelli is on-hand performing treatments and training staff. She works out of the spa for two weeks every other month. According to Roth, the exclusive partnership with Ciminelli helps set the spa apart from other local spas. Sharing her holistic approach to overall well-being, Ciminelli offers several innovative facials, including the Susan Ciminelli Aromatherapy Facial (\$180, \$250 with Ciminelli; 50 minutes) and the Susan Ciminelli Oxy-Mist Treatment (\$100, \$90 as an add-on to any facial), which delivers oxygen and nutrients to the skin.

With 35 employees on staff, the spa is able to provide 75 to 80 treatments a day. Guests of the hotel make up 75 percent of the clientele, which is also an especially spa-savvy group. Although most are seeking relaxation, the way they're spa-ing is changing. "Timewise, treatments are getting longer and longer," says Roth. "People



The decorative tiled archway is indicative of the California influence found throughout the spa.

are opting for more eighty-minute treatments and fewer fifty-minute treatments."

According to her, couples' treatments are also flourishing. Couples' packages, such as the Sunset Sanctuary (\$890 per couple, 4 hours), are also proving more enticing, as an increasing number of couples are interested in experiencing more than just a massage. The Sunset Sanctuary package includes a 30-minute hand and foot reflexology treatment followed by an 80-minute Stone Therapy Massage and a three-course sunset dinner with two glasses of champagne on the spa suite's terrace. The package concludes with a decadent dessert. "It's very popular for special occasions like proposals," says Roth, noting that the spa averages about eight to 10 Sunset Sanctuary packages a month.

As for Roth's greatest challenge, it's developing a steady stream of guests throughout the week. Although weekends are especially busy, Roth would like to achieve more balance with the spa's appointments. As a result, she often offers weekday specials, such as a treatment of the week, to boost business. Always looking to the future, Roth is busy staying on top of treatment trends so as to keep the spa at the forefront of what's happening in the industry.



The Spa  
at Four  
Seasons  
Resort  
The  
Biltmore  
Santa  
Barbara  
(CA)