

Local resort offers a weekend getaway



David N. Lee

Participants can enjoy the fresh air during a Tai Chi class at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort in San Luis Obispo.

Destination famed for its outdoor redwood tubs

BY DAVID N. LEE
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

If you are looking for a place to completely relax for the weekend, look no further than Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort in San Luis Obispo, about a mile inland from Avila Beach.

Guests are gently embraced by warm ocean breezes, majestic trees, the hospitality of an meticulous staff and soothing mineral water. Sycamore is known for its private outdoor redwood tubs, heated with natural mineral water. Each tub is tucked into an oak forest perched on a hillside above the resort.

Suites cost guests \$368 to \$390 per night, but the price includes stretching and exercise classes, guided hikes, and a 50 percent discount on private tubs, which cost \$30 per hour. A one-hour massage is \$90. Dinner runs \$16 to \$30.

"Because we believe in taking time to enjoy life and to recharge our often worn-out batteries, we have created an environment where you can be as active or as still as you would like to be," said Ray Hill, general manager at Sycamore.

Guests can enjoy the calming benefits of walking in the meditation garden

Info:

For more information on Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort, call (800) 234-5831 or visit www.sycamore-springs.com.

or a more energetic hike up the ridge for a view of Avila Bay. Guided hikes are available for guests who want to learn about the local flora, fauna and history. A walking

path also takes visitors on an easy mile route from the resort along beautiful, shady San Luis Creek to Avila Beach.

Several classes are offered in the resort's Healing Arts Institute. Classes in-

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clude introductory and restorative yoga as well as Pilates (muscle strengthening exercises), qi gong (an ancient Chinese martial art) and meditation.

A number of holistic health and natural therapies are available at Sycamore, including acupressure, aromatherapy healing, hypnotherapy and Ayurvedic holistic medicine. A full menu of massage therapy and skin care treatments are also available.

"Whether you are here for a restorative class, treatment, a day away or vacation retreat week, you are sure to discover the hidden joys and pleasures

Hill said.

The Gardens of Avila restaurant is top-notch by any standard. Serving healthy gourmet cuisine, Chef David McWilliams' entrees include pan-seared salmon with Thai jungle sauce, jicama salsa, basmati rice and sautéed spinach. Another favorite is rack of lamb with goat cheese bread pudding.

The professional, warm staff top off the relaxing experience at Sycamore.

Everyone seems to be quite friendly and in a good mood. As Marina Huston, program advisor said, "It's hard to have a bad day when you work here" — surrounded by natural beauty and the calming atmosphere of the mineral springs and heal-