

spectacular spas of Texas

By Linda Bauer, author of *Recipes from Historic America*

The word "spa" conjures up visions of a tranquil place in paradise that allows the soul to revitalize and the body to relax and rejuvenate. Destination spas are idyllic retreats where batteries are recharged, lifestyle changes are pursued and fabulous, healthy and yes - even gourmet dishes are served. Texas proudly claims some of the best and most luxurious spas in the South.

After visiting seven of the best spas in Texas, I think that their diversity and offerings should satisfy every type of spa seeker. From the elegant Watermark to the chic Greenhouse to the natural beauty of Lake Austin Spa, such sanctuaries cater to the most discriminating visitor. It is simply a matter of style, taste or location to choose which one suits your fancy. I recommend a visit to each and you be the judge!

The spas will be highlighted in alphabetical order due to the fact that they truly are remarkable and very different in atmosphere and style.

Cooper Wellness Center (pictured) is located in at 12200 Preston Road, Dallas. Call (972) 239-7223 for reservations. I am delighted to say that I spent a Sunday through Thursday attending one of their health weeks. It involved a stay at the Guest Lodge at The



Cooper Aerobics Center, which is a 62 room hotel and conference center. The classes at the Cooper Wellness program include teaching participants the tools for eating in a healthy manner (guests even dine at a local restaurant under the watchful eye of the director and nutritionist to ensure proper choices). Other emphases are on reducing stress, losing weight and improving fitness. Since top notch doctors are on the premises, they come in and teach classes, and then part of the day is spent having a physical and exercising. I did the complete body scan to check for possible plaque in the arteries as they showed on Oprah. Cooper is one of the few places



in the country that offers such advanced technology. I was able to watch the results and have an expert consultation.

Frankly, I think that those who want to improve their health should make Cooper

the first spa to visit with a complete physical analysis then go ahead and enjoy some spa treatments. Dr. Kenneth Cooper coined the term aerobics and has spent his life furthering the cause of wellness and prevention. I was honored to have Dr. Ted who is the columnist with USA Today Magazine as my physician. The spa reflexology and stone massages are excellent. Their almond vanilla sugar scrub is a private label treat to take home and remember the great spa stay. They also have a complete line of nutritional supplements that became my choice after comparing labels on my vitamins at home.

The Spa at the Crescent, located in The Rosewood Crescent Hotel, a luxurious property in Dallas has the most remarkable high ceiling and spacious lobby in Texas. The spa itself is a quiet retreat with a highly trained staff, who offer plenty of options for treatments. It may be used by guests and the general public. The spa café offers great freshly squeezed fruit and vegetable juices and light fare.

The most incredible wraps and massages have clients coming back for more. I will never forget the tranquil and soothing bath with candles, and drifting off after a heavenly wrap. I had been on a book tour and badly needed a rest. With just a few hours at the Crescent I was revitalized and did not want to leave the private lounge room. If you are interested in contacting them call (214) 871-3232.

The spectacular and enormous Gaylord Texan Hotel at 1501 Gaylord Trail in Grapevine, Texas boasts a **Relaxche Spa**, call (817) 778-1800. This convention mecca is a hotel with four acres of atriums of waterways, walkways and restaurants throughout the interior. One could get lost within, yet it soon became quite a pleasant entity within itself. The restaurants do not serve spa food but are happy to accommodate accordingly. The spa is pristine with plenty of space in the common areas and offers a huge array of services and specialties such as a Texas Red Grapefruit Sugar Glow and for men the Ranch Hand Muscle Buster. Texas Rose Radiance utilizes organically grown rose products to enhance the skin before an invigorating massage. Guests rave about the treat-



Lake Austin Spa (pictured above) at 1705 South Quinlan Park Road is truly a treasure with its natural verdant lushness, where boats pepper the lake and beamed rooms offer a quiet retreat. The accommodations are pure pleasure and unique patios are truly spectacular. The luxurious, yet rustic accommodations feature tiled floors and heavenly beds. The scenic shores of Lake Austin house the many spa aerobic opportunities from rowing to canoeing and hiking to the organic gardens that grace the grounds. Rooms vary and some feature fireplaces, hot tubs and lake views and even gardens.

My personal favorite is spending time in cooking class with Chef Terry. His relaxed and informative manner puts even the most novice cook at ease. His wonderful cookbooks are full of years of hard work and enable spa goers to recreate slimming cuisine at home long after the trip is complete. The multi million dollar spa is a treat for those who want to indulge, relax and get invigorated. Just call (800) 847-5637.

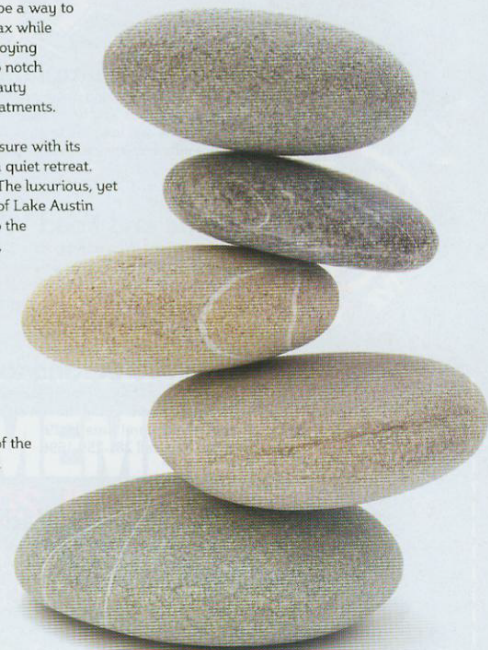
The Watermark Hotel and Spa located at 212 West Crockett on the San Antonio Riverwalk is in a restored historic building. For an unforgettable treat, book one of the exclusive spa rooms and prepare to be amazed at the incredible treat of living on the spa floor and just having to wear the provided robe to the treatments down the hall. The spa rooms are beautiful and certainly a way to fully enjoy the entire experience. Call (800) 830-1500. This is a very romantic way to spend a weekend. It has captured the prestigious Mobil Four Star Spa Award, one of only three in Texas!

After enjoying the opportunity of visiting the diverse and spectacular spas of Texas, I recommend that you try each one in order to reap the benefits of the great southern spa experience.

ments geared to the southern theme. This is a great place to bring the family because of the outdoor pool and nearby outlet shops for the kids while mom and teens (special treatments just for teens) can relax and indulge in the spa.

The Greenhouse Spa is an exclusively female spa that has been wowing clients for years. Located in Arlington this beauty is sheer luxury. As one enters the mansion it is apparent that this enclave is all about renewal and flair. The indoor pool in the middle of the spa is unforgettable with high white arches overhead and wide decks, where some classes are often held. The pool is the site for sun drenched lunches and fond memories of new found friends. Rooms are spacious with the best bedding and pillows for a fantastic night's sleep and exquisite breakfasts brought to your room. The incredible spa has excellent estheticians and Pilates trainers etc are state of the art. Meals are tailored to coincide with their very successful weight loss program. The evening meal is a joy with a subsequent chef demo or book chat or sometimes a featured speaker. If indulgence and luxury is your goal with some very fine educational opportunities then few spas on the planet can compare to the Greenhouse. Call (817) 640-4000.

The Houstonian Hotel Club and Spa is a landmark at 111 North Post Oak Lane and can be reached by calling (800) 231-2759. The Trellis Spa sports salmon colored stucco with a Mediterranean style architecture. The garden environment is lush and natural with a courtyard view. The float pool is a bit different, and since it is indoors it is a favorite of many clients. Bridal parties and mothers-to-be find this urban retreat to be a way to relax while enjoying top notch beauty treatments.



Photos courtesy Cooper Wellness Center and Lake Austin Spa.