

# CLOSE TO HOME GETAWAY TO SOOTH YOUR BODY AND SOUL

BY RUTH WHITE

The holidays have come and gone. One New Year's resolution that should be kept is your promise to take better care of yourself. Slow down, think about your health. That's so easy to say and difficult to do in the fast paced lives we live. Budgets are strained and we find ourselves working more and relaxing less. There is a cure for the tired and weary who just need a little break.

Seeking just a little breather for myself, I remembered a close friend always talking about Two Bunch Palms. She swore by the place and went there every chance she got. Was that place still there? Was it still open? Yes! It is not only still there and open, it welcomed me to be "Two Bunched."



**A cozy firepit seat at Matchbox with great street fair people watching**

My mini vacation began with a drive to the desert late Thursday afternoon. Leaving work just a bit early got me on the freeway before the rush, quickly checked in to Two Bunch Palms and off to Palm Springs in time to enjoy the weekly street fair from the perfect perch above the street at the Matchbox Restaurant. Dinner at the Matchbox was the perfect segue between the bustle of daily life and the peaceful desert Eden-like spa retreat.

I enjoyed the people watching from one of the special semi-private balcony tables that extend right over the street action. The restaurant is on the second floor where you are greeted by a spectacular fire pit that extends the length of the entry hall and invites you to sit perched with a beverage enjoying the flames and darkening desert skies. Specializing in hand built to order pizzas, this restaurant has a European flair with a full bar and plenty of great wine selections that encourage you to linger and enjoy a very casual and quiet dinner. The service is excellent, worthy of a gourmet restaurant, ready to assist but respectful and never rushing you to give up your table. Be sure that you stay long enough to enjoy a desert pizza. With elegantly thin crust topped with fresh fruits and ice cream, you won't regret the indulgence. I had

prepared myself to take some back to the room but, it was so good that there was nothing left but crumbs for the to-go box. No wonder they won the best pizza in the desert award for three years running. Drop in and enjoy the food and atmosphere at 155 S. Palm Canyon Drive, phone 760-778-6000.

After a browse through the street fair, I headed off to the spa. Two Bunch Palms is located at 67-425 Two Bunch Palms Trail in Desert Hot Springs, an easy drive from Orange County. After my evening of great food and shopping, I was ready to be welcomed into the guard gated sanctuary of the spa. Limited to only 52 rooms that range from singles up to 2 bedrooms with kitchens, each has its own assigned parking making

you feel more like you are staying in a private villa. There are no pets or children under age 18.

Considering that the entire resort is situated on over 56 acres of land, you can imagine how serene and peaceful the atmosphere is. My room, as most do, also had a large very private enclosed patio, perfect for lounging or sunbathing. I slipped into a bathing suit topped with one of the plush robes provided and headed to the Grotto for my first experience in the hot springs. Just steps away from my room brought me to a little changing cabin where you can park your robe and slippers and wade into the warm mineral water. Floats of various sizes and shapes allow you to fashion the perfect vehicle so that you float effortlessly in the water as every muscle begins to relax. Quiet is the rule. Respectful signs are posted everywhere reminding guests to keep their voices in hushed tones and leave cell phones behind. It's ok to do absolutely nothing here. Can you imagine it? This truly is an investment in your own peace and serenity.

There are two grotto pools where you can move from one temperature to the other without leaving the water. Both are fed by the two springs on the property. One spring is 170 degrees and the other 86 degrees. The waters are mixed to create the exactly perfect temperatures in the pools. "There must be something in the water!" There is! Noted scientist Dr. August Broue analyzed the waters and stated, "I have not found the like of them in any country I have explored. What impressed me was the mineral content of the water... it would appear

to have qualities superior to any water known to me." I could have used a cart to wheel myself back to the room. I was so relaxed. The healing waters are truly a very special natural gift.

The next morning I awoke after one of the best night's sleep I'd had in ages. I got into my Two Bunch uniform which consisted of a swimsuit with sweatpants topped by the plush robe. This is not a place requiring designer resort wear. This is a dine in your jammies and robe place.... Really! Guests are more than welcomed to go anywhere, including the gourmet restaurant, in robes and slippers. Breakfast is included in the room cost and served in the mountain view restaurant. You are welcomed to dine at the restaurant or prepare yourself a to-go to dine in



**Private palapas offer cozy retreats for an extensive choice of treatments**

American massage regiment that included a muscle relaxing session in a darkened sauna, followed by acknowledgements to the earth Gods by my native American masseuse. Thereafter I enjoyed 90 minutes of heavenly massage in my private palapa. From there I went back into the hot spring. It felt as if I had been on vacation for a week after less than 24 hours at Two Bunch Palms.

I slept through lunch and awoke late afternoon, relaxed and hungry as a bear. Good thing, as I was about to enjoy a terrific gourmet dinner. Two Bunch Palms may be a spa, but they don't serve you two lettuce leaves and a carrot and call it spa food. Don't tell the vegans but... they serve meat here. Real steaks and rack of lamb and desserts and wine and liquor... oh my!

You can treat your body to massages, yoga and facials. You can soak in hot springs. Then you can also treat your palate to some really, really good food. I was satisfied with this getaway on every possible level and have put it on

my "must go back" list.

Phone 760-329-8791 or visit their website at [www.twobunchpalms.com](http://www.twobunchpalms.com).



**Waterfalls and hot springs create an Eden-like soaking grotto**

your room. There is no formal room service but, you'll discover that this very private little resort will cater to its guests requests for almost anything reasonable. So, don't be afraid to ask. A staff member is always ready to assist and accommodate.

Second only to the world famous hot springs are the treatments. Many guests book numerous treatments every day. The treatment rooms are intimate solo palapas scattered around the grounds. The choice and the quality of the treatments is unsurpassed. You'll find an enticing menu ranging from the common to the exotic. Many of the professional estheticians have worked here for over ten years and their experience shows. I treated myself to a native



**Shhhhh! People are unwinding and relaxing.**