

ASPENIDEAK

THE FOOD
& WINE ISSUE

Classic Beauty

GIADA DE LAURENTIIS
FIRES UP ASPEN'S
CULINARY COTERIE

Energy Stars

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.
AND **GOVERNOR RITTER**
TRANSFORM COLORADO

SHIFT INTO NEUTRAL

LIGHTER TONES TO BEAT
THE SUMMER HEAT

Main lodge at night



Ranch Redux

ENCANTADO RESORT CAPTURES THE SPIRIT OF SANTA FE. BY ERIN LENTZ

Jockeying for position under a gas-station carport, my husband and I dodge golf-ball-size hail while an aggro driver's middle finger rewards our effort. En route to Santa Fe from Aspen, we're in the bleak, industrial heart of Pueblo instead of soaring down the gorgeous back roads of the San Luis Valley. Lost, road-weary, and running late, I call Auberge Resorts' Encantado to cancel the night's dinner plans. "We'll still hold a lovely table just in case," chirps the concierge. And with that, a weekend of blissful pampering began.

Located on 57 acres at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Encantado celebrates the essence of Santa Fe: pueblo architecture and indigenous healing and art. The New Mexico capital city is a day's trip from Aspen, through

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gorgeous Colorado and New Mexico terrain via the scenic Independence Pass. The resort is decidedly low-key, with a main lodge and 65 casitas and suites peppered on a serene, rebuilt ranch. Contemporary casita interiors channel regional roots—square-cut wood beams, polished stone floors and romantic kiva fireplaces. A 10-minute drive from downtown, the property is far enough from civilization to make BlackBerry-

ing feel like a faux pas; but the resort's fleet of Mercedes-Benzes makes the bustling downtown plaza easily accessible.

Longtime guests of The Little Nell will remember Eric Calderon, the general manager for nearly 20 years. Now the principal and chief operating officer of Auberge Resorts, Calderon has cherry-picked two notable former Aspenites for Encantado's epicurean team. There's Charles Dale, two-time James Beard nominee and former owner of Aspen restaurants Renaissance, Range and Rustique. As Encantado's executive chef, he oversees Terra, an AvroKO-designed restaurant. Dale's penchant for modern, rustic and seasonally inspired cuisine is found in such dishes as the crispy pork belly and Kurobuta tamale. And Richard Betts, formerly The Little Nell's

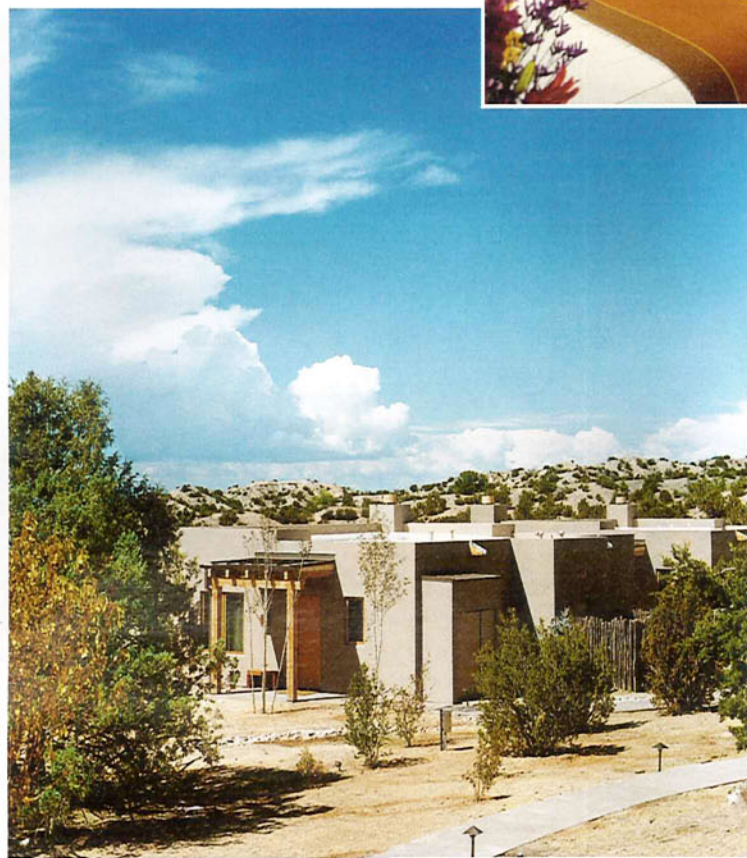


"THERE ARE MANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ASPEN AND SANTA FE, WHICH IS WHY I THINK ASPENITES LOVE IT."

—Eric Calderon



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Interior of one of the casita rooms; dining room at Terra restaurant; The Spa at Encantado's warming room; Casita Encantado



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHANSEN KRAUSE (CASITA); ERHARD FFEIFFER (SPA); COURTESY OF ENCANTADO RESORT (INTERIOR, TERRA)

master sommelier, consults as Auberge's master of wines.

While Dale's menu is reason enough to linger at the resort, the Spa at Encantado's regionally inspired menu may have you booking an extra night. Delivered in private, outdoor rooms, customized treatments include the healing properties of blue corn, juniper, chili, sage and adobe mud. Allow extra time to savor the outdoor soaking pools, and you'll be primed for Santa Fe gallery hopping. (On your return to Aspen, be sure to hit Sand Dunes National Park.)

"There are many similarities between Aspen and Santa Fe, which is why I think Aspenites love it," explains Calderon. "It has all the same activities we love to do here—but with different sites, smells, sounds and culture." encantadoresort.com **AP**

INSIDER INFO Santa Fe

EAT: Terra, Cafe Pasqual's and La Casa Sena

DRINK: Margaritas at Coyote Café

SEE: Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe Opera House, San Miguel Mission, Santa Fe Railyard Farmers' Market

STAY: Encantado Resort