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peaceful RETREAT

SPA OJAI AT
OJAI VALLEY INN (CA)
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FEATURES

a closer look at some of the spas that are making news in the industry both here and abroad

46 PERFECT ZEN
Spa Ojai at Ojai
Valley Inn (CA)



The treatments and offerings at the newly renovated Spa Ojai reflect the traditions and culture of the surrounding valley.



perfectzen

The energy is palpable at a newly renovated spa in Ojai, CA, that aims to create a relaxing and healing environment for its guests. By Nicole Altavilla

Ojai, CA, is a small artsy city situated 90 minutes north of Los Angeles in the Ojai Valley. Residents and visitors alike believe Ojai holds mystical powers and possesses a special energy and a feeling of peaceful sacredness. In fact, it's been said that Ojai is a spiritual vortex because of its geomagnetic forces, natural land formations, and the positive energy of its inhabitants. Whether hanging at the farmers' market or enjoying the Pink Moment, when the fading sunset creates a brilliant shade of pink for several minutes on the Topatopa Bluff, people are attracted to Ojai for its good vibrations. Whatever the reason you attribute the magnetic pull of Ojai, one thing is undeniable, there is a peaceful energy permeating throughout the recently renovated **Spa Ojai** at the iconic Ojai Valley Inn (CA) that can be seen and felt.

The resort's recent \$5 million renovation included an update

to the spa and luxury spa penthouse suites. The 31,000-square-foot spa's new look was designed by Los Angeles-based interior design firm Amber Interiors. "The entire spa was furnished to look and feel like the firm's well-known laid-back California aesthetic," says Kate Morrison, director of wellness and sustainability at Ojai Valley Inn. "We were focused on integrating new technology and creating a sustainability-forward design for our guests." The renovation included various public spaces and the spa's 24 treatment rooms, which are named after different flora that grow in abundance in the Ojai Valley, such as cedar, poppy, and sage. "Once indoors, guests will find new luxury lockers, and new flooring, tiling, and lighting throughout the space for a relaxing, peaceful environment," says Morrison. "New vanity stations and additional shower space also contribute to the enhanced experience, as well as a dedicated quiet room on the women's side and a new cold plunge on the men's side. Guests

OWNER: Crown Family

SPA DIRECTOR: Kate Morrison

OPENED: December 1997

RENOVATION: February 2021

CLIENT BASE: 70% female
30% male

SPACE: 31,000 square feet
24 treatment rooms

PRODUCT LINES & EQUIPMENT:
Arcona, Body Bliss, Comphy, Dazzle Dry, Feelgoodz, Living Earth Crafts, Oakworks, Osea Malibu, Peloton, ResortSuite, SpaRitual, Technogym, Woodway

ARCHITECT:
Bill Mahan (Santa Barbara, CA)

INTERIOR DESIGNER:
Amber Interiors (Los Angeles)



The spa offers treatments in the Kuyam room that include a clay body mask, intense dry heat, and inhalation therapy.

will also be able to enjoy a newly expanded Serenity Lounge upstairs with soft, cozy-chic furnishings to complement the warmth of the space.”

The Ojai Valley is a serene and deeply spiritual place, so the spa added treatments and offerings that reflect the traditions and culture of the surrounding valley. “We offer private and small-group Kuyam treatments, which are inspired by the Chumash Native American word meaning ‘a place to rest together,’ and include a therapeutic desert clay body mask with essential oils, intense dry heat, and inhalation therapy,” says Morrison. “We incorporate a traditional Chumash narrative in the experience that reflects our region’s native traditions. We also offer spiritual wellness treatments such as crystal and reiki energy healing and sound healing treatments.”

In addition to its Native American and locally inspired treatments, the spa offers a wide range of traditional and customary therapies, such as facials, massage, nail services, and spa packages. For example, the Advanced CBD Oil Massage (\$245, 60 minutes) utilizes the healing powers of organic hemp-derived CBD oil to help soothe aches and pains caused by inflammation of the joints and damaged connective tissue; and the Relaxation Massage (\$225, 60 minutes) is a traditional Swedish-style massage that helps to reduce tension using light-to-medium pressure to soothe muscles and create a state of relaxation. Guests can also choose from a range of facials such as the Brightening Botanical Facial (\$225, 60 minutes), which helps cleanse, hydrate, nourish, and repair the skin, leaving the complexion more balanced and vibrant; and the Rejuvenate Oxygen Facial (\$250, 60 minutes), which utilizes advanced oxygen technology to deliver highly concentrated serums deep into the skin, restoring its natural vitality and glow.

Spa Ojai, and its signature services, are popular among guests from around the world, as well as those from the Southern California area. The Ojai Body Polishes (\$225, 60 minutes) treatment

SPA TALK *with* Kate Morrison



Meet Kate Morrison, director of wellness and sustainability at Spa

Ojai at Ojai Valley Inn, who has 18 years of experience in the spa and hospitality industry.

What is your proudest accomplishment? I am most proud of Spa Ojai’s commitment to being single-use plastic-free since 2016. This initiative has kick-started a stronger focus for our entire resort to move in a greener direction.

What has surprised you most about working in the spa industry? It’s surprising how quickly the spa industry has recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. At first, it was unclear if spa and

wellness would continue to be as relevant post-pandemic, yet we were able to safely adapt to the new environment and we’ve come back stronger than ever.

What’s your favorite skincare ingredient?
Vitamin C.

If you could work in any other profession in the world, what would you be? If I had to choose a different profession, it would be something focused on benefiting the planet or the environment.

How would you sum up your personal philosophy?
Life’s too short to drink the house wine.

How do you like to spend your time away from work?
When I’m away from work, I love to be outdoors, and I enjoy spending time with my family.



The spa offers guests ample places to relax and be pampered after enjoying the resort's many activities like outdoor yoga and aromatherapy oil blending sessions.



includes a full-body exfoliation to eliminate skin impurities and stimulate circulation throughout the body. It also includes an application of body butter or lotion to leave the skin hydrated and renewed. Spa Ojai's guests select one of the three available options, including Lemon Verbena & Avocado for a fresh and hydrating service; Foaming Lavender Sugar, which is fragrant and gentle; or Rosemary Sage Salt, which is purifying and invigorating. Another popular signature service is the Mindful Pedicure (\$120, 60 minutes) featuring SpaRitual's Sound of Color meditation to help guests relax. During the service, guests enjoy an audio-guided meditation while their toes are pampered with exfoliation, hydration, cuticle care, nail shaping, and buffing. The service concludes with an application of vegan color.

Spa Ojai, which has 40 members on its staff ranging from full-time, part-time, or on call, has also implemented several

green initiatives to its menu of services and offerings. For example, the spa offers a waterless pedicure, which eliminates a soak and all chemicals that are needed to clean and sanitize soaking tubs; it recently moved to organic, unscented massage oil for all massages; and all of its skincare lines are high-end, clean, natural, and effective. What's more, in 2016, Spa Ojai announced a commitment to sustainability practices and protecting the environment by becoming single-use plastic-free, which led to the addition of stainless steel water and snack cups, a swimsuit drying service in place of plastic bags, and chilled washcloths in lieu of towellelettes.

In addition to spa treatments, a visit to Spa Ojai allows guests access to two pools, a fully equipped gym, and mind and body classes. They can also browse a variety of skincare, body-care, cosmetics, leisure and athletic apparel, jewelry, candles, homecare accessories, and more at the spa's boutique. "Our estheticians offer skincare recommendations to each of their clients," says Morrison. "Additionally, guests may shop our signature bodycare line and featured spa product lines from anywhere in the world via our online boutique." The spa also has an on-site Spa Café that offers light breakfast and lunch options in an indoor or outdoor courtyard setting adjacent to Spa Ojai. The Spa Café's menu features healthy dishes made with locally grown and organic produce, from a comprehensive juice and smoothie menu to health and wellness bowls. Further, guests can unleash their creativity in the Artist Cottage & Apothecary, a working artist studio and apothecary for instruction in aromatherapy oil blending. Morrison hopes to add even more wellness offerings to the spa in the future. "We are looking into creating a comprehensive property-wide membership program that would span spa, golf, dining, culinary classes, and activities," she says. "Spa Ojai intends to grow its wellness offerings to include aerial yoga and implement more sustainability initiatives throughout the resort to better our environment."

Guests who desire the ultimate wellness experience at Ojai Valley Inn can opt to stay in one of the resort's newly renovated spa penthouse suites. The 1,500-square-foot, two-bedroom Sunset and Moonrise penthouse suites are situated above Spa Ojai and perfect for guests looking for a relaxing and rejuvenating retreat. The suites, which were designed by Bar Architects (Los Angeles and San Francisco), boast views of the surrounding picturesque Ojai Valley and offer ample private outdoor space. Design touches include handmade wool rugs and hardwood flooring; bathrooms with Carrara marble finishes; luxurious outdoor lounge seating; and a fire table. These penthouse suites and the new spa are a perfect match for Ojai Valley, the unofficial Zen capital of Southern California. "At Spa Ojai, we are dedicated to offering exceptional service and unique, relaxing spa treatments to our guests," says Morrison. "Wellness is a primary focus for many travelers at this time, and we are proud to offer a beautiful and rejuvenating sanctuary for those visiting the Ojai Valley Inn." ●