

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

HILTON SQUAW PEAK

Phoenix, Arizona

Cognoscenti Magazine editors stayed in a one-bedroom casita at the expansive **Hilton Squaw Peak** during a recent visit. Inside, the casita is decorated in shades of red, violet, green and beige. The Spanish Mission style architecture is pleasing, with French doors opening onto a shaded patio and courtyard, creating a nice “residential” feel. The well-equipped suite has comfortable sofas, a kitchen table and bar counter, plus a refrigerator and microwave that provide light self-catering options for those who are seeking them. There’s a separate bedroom located up a rather steep flight of stairs.



A residential feel at the Hilton Squaw Peak Resort & Spa

Hilton Squaw Peak is very much a family resort. Its “Kid’s Concierge” and “Coyote Camp” programs provide supervised fun programs for children that are based on Southwestern cultural activities such as panning for gold and going on arrowhead hunts. At the resort’s center is the River Ranch, with an expansive nine acres of swimming pools and waterfalls, not to mention a 130-foot water slide—for the

child in all of us—and a “river” in which to float on a hot day.

According to PR and Marketing Manager Andee Oleno, the aim at Hilton Squaw Peak is to be “Point perfect, every guest, every time. The service is what keeps our guests coming back.”

Tocasierra Spa

Lacking the glittering appointments of other spas in the area, Hilton Squaw Peak’s small **Tocasierra Spa** distinguishes itself through its personal service and the creativity of its treatments. Under Spa Director Cassie Neidhart’s leadership, Tocasierra offers several daring and unconventional treatments—including a couple that we were eager to try.

The *Aromatherapy Massage* featured “Tranquility” oils that our masseuse skillfully worked into a penetrating, therapeutic deep body rub. The mix of oils included lavender, allspice, temple orange, lemongrass, and marjoram, among other fragrances.

We also tried the exotic *Shirodhara Head & Face*

Treatment. After determining the personal Ayurvedic constitution type through the use of a questionnaire, the therapist dripped a blend of hot oils over the “third eye” of the forehead. These oils were permitted to enter the hair, which—together with a vigorous scalp massage—enlivened the scalp. Roughly an hour after receiving this treatment, a hot flush physically came on—perhaps ample testament to its efficacy in removing the toxins which had built up in the system over time.

Lantana Grill

A warm fireplace, large wooden beams, and traditional Christmas music playing in the background set a cozy tone for our dinner at the Lantana grill, one of several dining places at Hilton Squaw Peak. Luis Solorio, the restaurant’s General Manager, perfectly described its décor as lying “somewhere between Arizona and a chalet.”

We encountered a few food problems mingled in with a few tasty items. A chilled shrimp cocktail was fresh and tangy, while crab cakes were under-spiced and coated with an exterior breading that made them excessively doughy. Caesar salad was loaded with far too many croutons, while a good quality filet of steak arrived at table closer to raw than to rare, and had to be returned to the kitchen. The same piece of meat, already sliced open, was eventually returned to table, this time a proper medium rare (but at a fine restaurant, an item that is returned to kitchen by a diner should *always* be replaced with a fresh one). Better was breakfast the following morning.

Hilton Squaw Peak Resort

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