

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

WESTIN KIERLAND RESORT Scottsdale, Arizona

When **Cognoscenti Magazine** editors learned about the splashy new \$180 million **Westin Kierland Resort & Spa** opening in posh Scottsdale Arizona, they couldn't wait to pay it a visit—and were glad they did.

The experience begins in the lobby, which has all the drama of being in a canyon. Here, stairways drop grandly down through a series of tiered levels towards picture windows offering views of the lake and lush green golf course. The lobby's canyon-like feel is no accident, since the resort was consciously designed to recall many of Arizona's traditional themes. The gradations of color used for the façade of the central building are intended to simulate the changing colors of a canyon rim; a 900-foot "flowing river" snakes through the swimming complex; the large collection of Arizona art is found sprinkled everywhere; and a garden near the café reveals the pattern of a Navajo rug when viewed from an upper-story room. As Public Relations Director Donna Butler notes, "When you walk away from the resort, you'll take away a little bit of Arizona with you."

We stayed in a wrap-around suite consisting of two large bedrooms and a luxurious, super-spacious living room linking them both. From different parts of the suite, French doors lead out onto a large, shaded balcony. (We lingered there at sunset, watch-

ing guests gather around a blazing outdoor fire pit just below.) Every amenity is present in these rooms, including high-speed Internet access, two-line telephones, oversized work desks and in-room safes. The



The Kierland's facade recalls the colors of a canyon rim

notable exceptions in this spacious island of elegance are the cowhide chairs (spots included!), which we found not only aesthetically crude, but also rough and uncomfortable against the skin.

The shower is one of the nicest we've ever experienced. Westin has obviously given a lot of thought to this aspect of its trademark "Heavenly Bath." A dual-head jet gives the bather wider coverage, yielding an experience that's more akin to standing beneath a cascading waterfall than taking a normal shower. The shower stall itself is a fantasy of stone, marble and glass, and there are plenty of thick towels to wrap yourself with afterwards.

Managing to tear ourselves away from the seductive charms of this suite, we discovered a multitude of other delights at the resort. There's a beautifully landscaped golf course, several swimming pools and hot tubs, plus a state-of-the-art gym with personal flat screen televisions for each workout machine. There's also an outstanding full-service spa, **Agave**. [See our separate review of the spa in this issue.]

Hungry? You'll find plenty of eateries at the Westin Kierland, and "every one of them has its own place and personality," notes Executive Chef Anton Brunbauer. At **Nelly Cashman's Monday Club Café**, soft lights and reggae music (great idea!) lend a hip feel. Menu choices range from corn-crustured Australian sea bass to Kobe beef; portions are generous and tasty. Set along the fairways of the Kierland Golf Club, **Brittlebush Bar and Grill** has a warm, friendly style; it's casual enough for duffers to relax at after a day on the links. Soups, salads, and sandwiches include items like gazpacho, crab and lamb—not to mention a yummy grilled salmon BLT—served up daily. (The resort's signature restaurant, **Deseo**, is separately reviewed in this issue.)



Beautiful design inside and out

What's the key to making guests feel at home at a resort of this size? Painstaking attention to detail, says General Manager Bruce Lange. "Sometimes you'll have a great experience without knowing all the elements that went into it. The quality of the components is what matters." He describes the overall ambience at the Westin Kierland as "comfortable but not casual, friendly but not familiar. This matches Arizona itself, where the lifestyle is endearing. Nobody is showy here."

Come to think of it, our experience was a lot like this—elegant yet relaxed, soothing yet invigorating. From the minute we checked into the Westin Kierland, we were wowed by the combination of beautiful exterior and interior design and a superb package of resort services and amenities. Considering that this resort had been open for only a month when we visited, the accomplishment is all the more striking.

This article was written by Nicole Medvecky-Riggs, Contributing Editor to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

© 2003 Cognoscenti Magazine

The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa
 6902 East Greenway Parkway
 Scottsdale, Arizona
 Ph: (480) 624-1000
www.kierlandresort.com