



Shared Wellness: GLEN IVY HOT SPRINGS

GLEN IVY SPA
COMBINES A
WELLNESS OASIS
WITH A SOCIAL
SANCTUARY

BY BEKAH WRIGHT

A patch of desert catches the eye. Crowns of palm trees touch the clouds. Further in, a stone labyrinth sets the area apart from the barren landscape. Beside it are stacks of rocks, left there as if in homage to the gods. On a platform overlooking both, a Hatha Yoga class is in session. Nearby, the soft sounds of splashing water beckon. Is this Utopia a mirage? No, it's Glen Ivy Hot Springs, a Corona, California icon that's been going strong since 1860.

Even before the hot springs opened its doors under the Glen Ivy banner, the site was a gathering place. "From oral tradition we've learned that Native Americans considered the springs a spot where all were welcome and there could be no conflict," says Jim Root, CEO and President of Glen Ivy Hot Springs. "It was a place of renewal."

That tradition continues today, with over 200,000 guests visiting Glen Ivy each year. On any given day there can be from 250 to 700 visitors kicking back on poolside lounge chairs. Among them are some of the organization's 800 members who make regular sojourns not only from Corona and Los Angeles, but Riverside, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta, and beyond.



Arriving from a foggy Sherman Oaks, my friend, Kimberlee Smith, and I step across Glen Ivy's threshold to be greeted by the scent of eucalyptus trees and lavender plants, immediately putting us in the mood for spa treatments. Unwinding from the 65-mile drive from Los Angeles is in order first. To the rescue are 19 swimming pools, mineral baths, and whirlpools.

One certain to accomplish the task is the Lounge Pool. A scant 18 inches deep, its sole purpose is for floating. Here, whispered snippets of conversation convey the reasons various visitors have made Glen Ivy the day's destination, be it a birthday, wedding shower, girls' getaway, or, in the case of Kimberlee and myself, a farewell. "No one comes to Glen Ivy alone," says Root. "Whereas at most spas it's just you and a therapist, Glen Ivy is very much a social spa with a community."

If floating all day is one's goal—then perfect. Otherwise, there's a full docket of activities to choose from. The crux of these is Glen Ivy Hot Springs' Wheel of Wellness with its seven timeless truths of the spa lifestyle: taking time for good food, nurturing relationships, keeping bodies healthy and fit, finding a deeper sense of wellbeing, healing treatments and therapies, knowledge to learn and grow, and connecting with nature.

Both good food and bonding can be had at Café Solé. Overseen by Executive Chef Bill Wavrin, the venue has several food stations offering salads, pizzas, and hot entrees. A server, whose plate-flipping antics are sheer entertainment, continuously gets the same request. No, not for salads, but the ultimate in comfort food—nachos piled high with steak and chili. Yes, we ordered the nachos, and red velvet cupcakes, too. And why not? After all, communing isn't only done while soaking in the sun. There are fitness classes and swimming afoot.

The foundation of Glen Ivy lies in its programs, not just its venue. Says Root, "As stewards of the industry, Glen Ivy has made it our obligation to fulfill the promise of what spa essence is all about versus fluff." Root has made this his mission—reclaiming Glen Ivy's true north—since coming onboard as CEO and President in 2008.

Ensuring Glen Ivy's programs enhance the community experience is Guest Experience Programming Director, Seraphina Ashe, who oversees all activities and events, including its JoyFitness regime. "Many people think of fitness as a task versus something fun and enjoyable. Glen Ivy works hard to make workouts enjoyable, meaningful, and results-driven at the same time." Up to six group class-



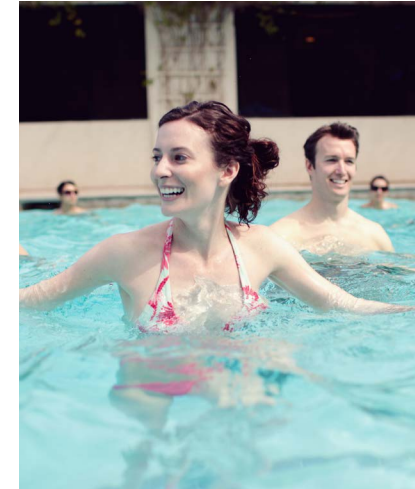
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es are held on-site each day, from Aqua Fit, Tai Chi/Qigong and Hoopfit, to Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, and Gong Meditation.

A fan of Glen Ivy's classes, workshops and wellness retreats is seven-year member, Lonnie Scott. "I've taken cooking, Watsu, and massage classes," he says. "But after three back surgeries, my mainstay is daily time in the mineral baths."

Ashe says members like Scott are veritable ambassadors when it comes to informing newbies about the benefits of Glen Ivy's mineral waters. "Taking of the waters' has been done for centuries to benefit gastro-intestinal disorders, inflammatory issues like arthritis, and soothing and healing the skin and mind," she says. "Not only are the waters mineral-rich and contain sulfur, they're also rich in negative ions, making them both detoxifying and nourishing."

Renewing and relaxing go a step further via Glen Ivy's spa treatments. Beyond the spa, a favorite spot for submitting to pampering is Under the Oaks, a series of outdoor treatment





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rooms beneath centuries-old oak trees. A seasonal treatment menu highlights fruits, herbs, and plant extracts, applied through Primavera products. Blissed-out spagoers will happily mutter the name of the service they've just experienced, be it a Healing Herbal Compress Massage or an Instinctual Indonesian Ginger Pedicure.

Still to be conquered: Club Mud and The Grotto. California's only red clay mud bath, Club Mud is a popular draw with visitors who slather themselves beyond recognition in the earthy, red soup that's an excellent exfoliant.

The perfect follow-up to sloughing in Club Mud is time in The Grotto (an additional \$25 fee). An elevator transports spagoers below ground to a series of caves, where they're literally painted with an emulsifying potion (a rather pleasant experience, though ticklish), then go through a circuit of heat, showers and, finally, chill time over hot tea and apples.

Hushed conversations are overheard above the crunching of apples. A group of women have made the trek to Glen Ivy as a goodbye for a friend who's moving. She recounts the excited anticipation leading up to this trip. Tears start raining as she glances at the clock. There are only two more hours before closing time... Kimberlee and I exchange a look, tears welling in our eyes as well. "After years of coming to Glen Ivy together, we're saying our goodbyes, too," Kim says. "There won't be any place like this in my new hometown."

What do the next 154 years hold for Glen Ivy Hot Springs? Root hints at how the organization is hoping to maintain its history and legacy, while catapulting into a future, with the words

"destination resort." Would the community welcome overnight stays at the longtime day spa? I can only remember our shared laments in The Grotto—friends wishing the day at Glen Ivy would go on forever.

For more information on Glen Ivy Hot Springs Corona and Brea locations visit: glenivy.com



Bekah Wright pens articles about travel, entertainment and spas for outlets like Yahoo Travel, Westways, and HI Luxury. She's grateful for the invention of texting, which will make it feel like her bestie Kim still lives right around the corner.

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