

EXPLORING TRAVEL FAVORITES AND FRONTIERS

TRAVEL AGE WEST

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Highlights Of Western Canada

Beauty and bounty define the provinces of Western Canada

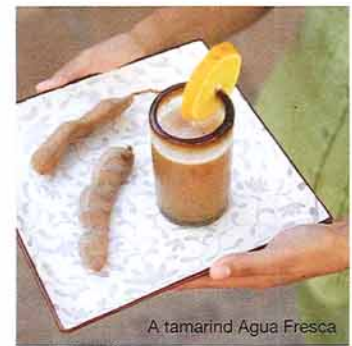
■ Maui's
Stand-Up
Sport

■ Finding
Bliss
In Baja

■ Istanbul's
Turkish Bath
Experience



The Spa at Esperanza's outdoor quiet area is especially lovely at dusk.



A tamarind Agua Fresca

Pampered in Baja

Guests enjoy massage, yoga and more at the Spa at Esperanza in Los Cabos

BY DEBORAH DIMOND

FIRST, CAME THE DRINK ORDER. This is not my typical routine at a resort spa — usually, I am handed a locker key and escorted to the changing room. At the Spa at Esperanza, in Los Cabos, however, the thoughtful touches start the moment you arrive — when you decide on your post-treatment cocktail order. The drink is part of an extensive spa beverage menu called Agua Frescas that serves up various vitamins and antioxidants in an indigenous fruit smoothie form.

Esperanza, An Auberge Resort, is comprised of 57 guestrooms, 60 privately owned villas and 36 private residences. The property is located on the bluffs overlooking two private coves at Punta Ballena near Cabo San Lucas. The resort's Spa at Esperanza offers a wide selection of treatments, includ-

ing massages, facials and manicure and pedicure packages. It also provides private yoga sessions and classes for couples — all of which will help clients relieve any tight muscles they brought along with them on vacation.

Once I changed into my robe, I headed out to the relaxation area. The co-ed pre- and post-treatment area is outdoors, and guests are offered a signature water therapy before their spa service utilizing a warm spring soaking pool, steam cave and a cool waterfall rinse. With my light sunburn, however, I sought refuge under the wide veranda, where I could escape the sun in my lounge chair while listening to the soothing sounds of water fountains.

After a very relaxing Swedish message, I indulged in the non-alcoholic melon cocktail I ordered when I first arrived.

Unfortunately, after the drink, with little time to spare before my next activity, I had no choice but to hurry past the soaking pools and Jacuzzis and make a beeline straight to the beautiful stone-lined private outdoor showers. There I rinsed off under a canopy of leafy vines — all the while contemplating how I could build my own shower just like that one back at home in Los Angeles.

Beyond the spa, Esperanza provides guests with other health and wellness opportunities. For guests who enjoy yoga, for instance, the resort has recently added a new pair of complimentary classes. At 6 p.m. on Thursdays, guests can end their day with a calming evening yoga session by candlelight, and on Saturday mornings at 7 a.m., guests can begin their day on the resort's private beach with an energizing session set to the rising sun.

The Spa at Esperanza has received numerous awards and accolades and it's easy to see why — this is definitely a destination that takes relaxation to another level. After my time well spent at the Spa at Esperanza, I returned home feeling renewed and refreshed. ■

THE DETAILS: *Esperanza, An Auberge Resort* (866-311-2226; www.esperanzaresort.com)