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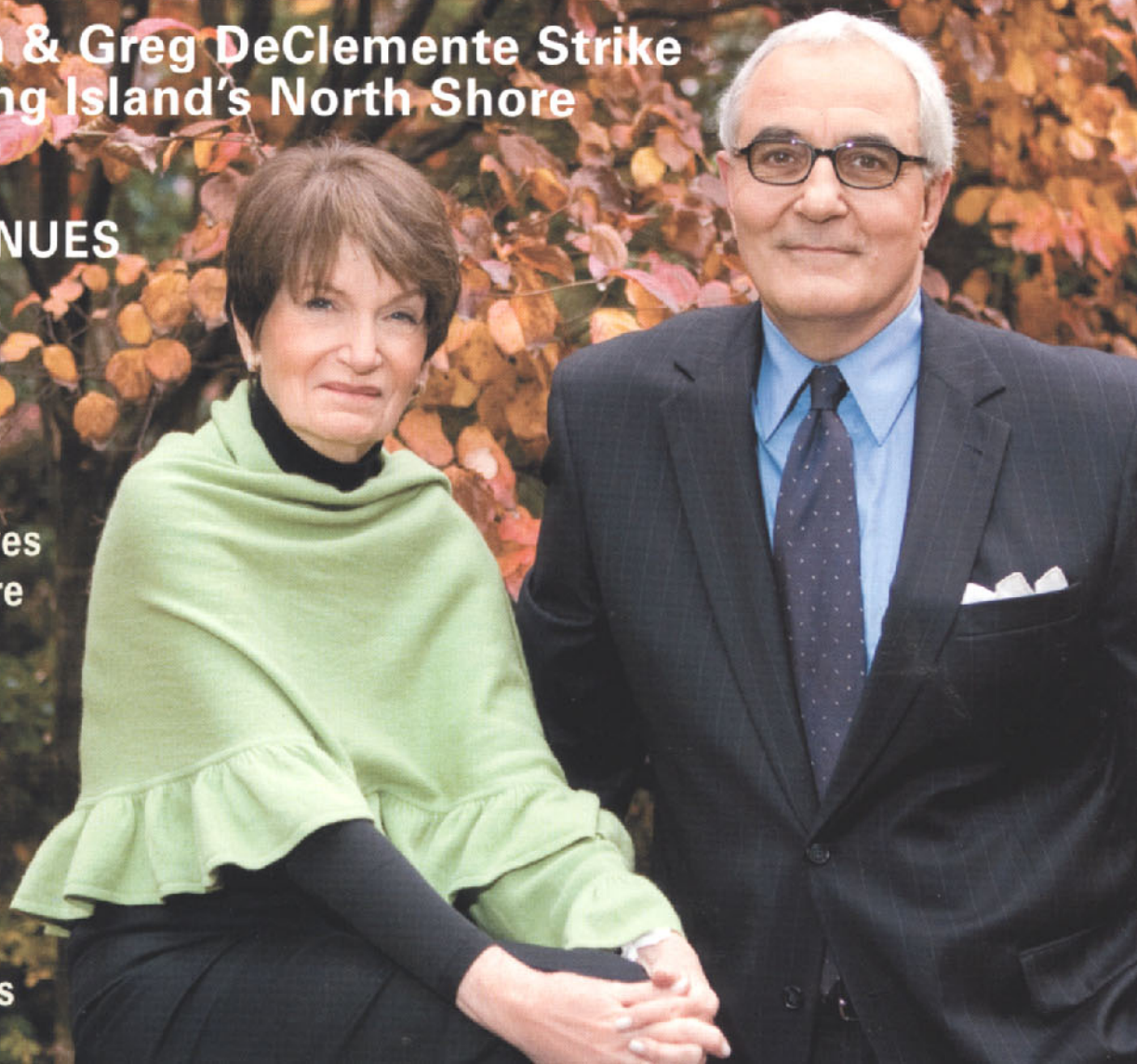
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A ONE-BEDROOM SUITE is pure Southwestern design throughout and offers unfettered mountain vistas.



SANTA FE'S Encantado

Auberge Resorts' latest incarnation is a popping oasis amid the New Mexico landscape.

Since its opening in August, **Encantado** (www.encantadoresort.com) in Santa Fe has already welcomed actor and director Robert Redford—twice. If it's good enough for the Sundance Kid, we say it will knock the socks off your top VIPs.

The property, an Auberge Resort, is set in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, cut well back into the desert landscape. All told, it's spread out on 57 acres and dotted by 65 casitas, which includes nine suites, all offering stunning views of the Jemez Mountains in front and the Sangre de Cristo in back. There are four different room types: Patio Casitas, Pinon Casi-

tas, Vista Casitas and Encantado Suites. Our Pinon Casita, No. 3, was a study in Southwest style, exemplified by the whimsical cow-skin-patterned bench that rested against one wall. The remainder of the room was just as fun: matte-finished, ash-colored concrete is used as flooring. Hint: At the flick of a switch, the floor in the bathroom can be heated (think bare feet on a warm floor, post shower). The bathroom was expansive and included a large stone-laced rainforest shower, deep soaking tub and double sinks.

The bedroom looks directly out on the spacious private patio. What a treat it was to enjoy a

cup of coffee there, early one morning. When the weather turns brisker, a working kiva-style fireplace inside will keep your clients toasty. Luxury travel advisors can contact Director of Sales and Marketing Angie Cross (across@encantadoresort.com; 505-946-5814) with any accommodations-related queries. Leisure Sales Manager Juan Vigil (jvigil@encantadoresort.com; 505-946-5816) is the contact to call for your VIPs.

Note: The Vista Casitas offer premium mountain and sunset views, with most featuring a balcony. The top suites here are Nos. 63, 64 and 65, which are set a bit back on the property and perched

on an incline for maximum views. They also feature wood flooring and outdoor fireplaces. Tip: Apprise your clients that Santa Fe is 7,000 miles above seal level, so shortness of breath can occur. The resort operates a fleet of Mercedes and golf carts to shuttle guests around.

The 10,000-square-foot Spa at Encantado blends in perfectly with the surrounding landscape—it's low and spread out with a mix of indoor and outdoor areas. Fifteen treatment rooms are available for a mix of indulgences, none more popular than the invigorating Mountain Spirit Purification: a two-hour ritual beginning with a smudging



SEPARATE SPA AREAS (above) allow for private indulgence for both men and women.

CASITAS (left) are perched on slight inclines to give optimal views of the New Mexico sunsets.



ceremony followed by an adobe clay body mask. After a restful wrap with a scalp and foot massage, the lucky guest is awakened to enjoy a rain shower rinse, ending with a juniper-sage massage. Note: Susan O'Bryen (sobryen@encantadoresort.com; 505-988-9955), director of spa services, encourages clients to book spa treatments at least two weeks out.

We were most impressed by the separate men's and women's areas of the spa, each containing an outdoor whirlpool and shower and eucalyptus-infused steam room. Must Do: Shower down, jump in the whirlpool, stew, then make a beeline for the steam room. Rinse and repeat.

Dining at Encantado's Terra restaurant is a sublime treat led by Head Chef Charles Dale, who sources ingredients literally on property (there is an adjacent herb garden). Every meal is prepared with the utmost precision, whether it is the *chilaquiles de la*

casa, a breakfast favorite of eggs, roasted tomatoes and red chili sauce, or the locally raised lamb with green lentil dal for dinner—the restaurant gets it right.

As gratifying as the resort is, you'll want to advise your clients to spend some time in the downtown area of Santa Fe, with its art scene, flea markets and shops filled with endearing knick-knacks. This is where Encantado really proves its luxury worth. Not only are guests required to town in a Mercedes SUV, they are dropped off at Encantado's own VIP Lounge in the heart of town. Exclusively for Encantado guests, the space is filled with information on Santa Fe along with snacks and beverages. Best, Lead Concierge Dené Canon (dcanon@encantadoresort.com; 505-946-5822) is at the ready to arrange excursions.

Back at Encantado, guests can enjoy the evening air huddled around one of the property's fire pits while imbibing one of the various vintages from the glass-encased wine room in the dining room. Betty's Bar offers an assortment of smaller plates; we recommend *los tres ceviches*, featuring lobster, smoked tomato and snapper, which is mixed with tequila.

Note: Tread lightly, Encantado is a new property and, as such, needs time to mature. Shrubbery is still young and grass is still not filled in over some spots. Once full-blown, Encantado will become even more of an alluring destination. Fly clients into Albuquerque International Sunport, about a 45-minute drive away; Santa Fe Municipal Airport can handle smaller private jets (Gulf Stream 4s are the largest aircraft allowed) and is about 20 minutes from Encantado.

—David Eisen

ADVISOR INSIGHT:

John Clifford, president of **International Management**, visited Encantado in September. "Encantado is poised to become Santa Fe's best and most complete luxury resort," he says. "The accommodations vary from cozy Patio Casitas, to über-luxe One-bedroom Suites with mountain views."

He's as high on the resort's dining. "The secret is out on Terra restaurant, so book dining in advance [at least two weeks]," he says.

"The signature Spa at Encantado offers something totally unique: two exclusive couples' suites named Sunstone and Moonstone, where guests indulge in a private setting complete with indoor steam, sauna, outdoor soaking tub and fireplace."

Santa Fe is also an educational draw. "The city boasts a multicultural heritage, including a rich Spanish culture," Clifford says. "One of the city's unique performing artists is María Benítez, an internationally acclaimed flamenco dancer and choreographer." She and her husband, Cecilio, founded and direct the **María Benítez Teatro Flamenco** (www.mariabenitez.com; 505-955-8562), which includes performances and classes for children and adults.