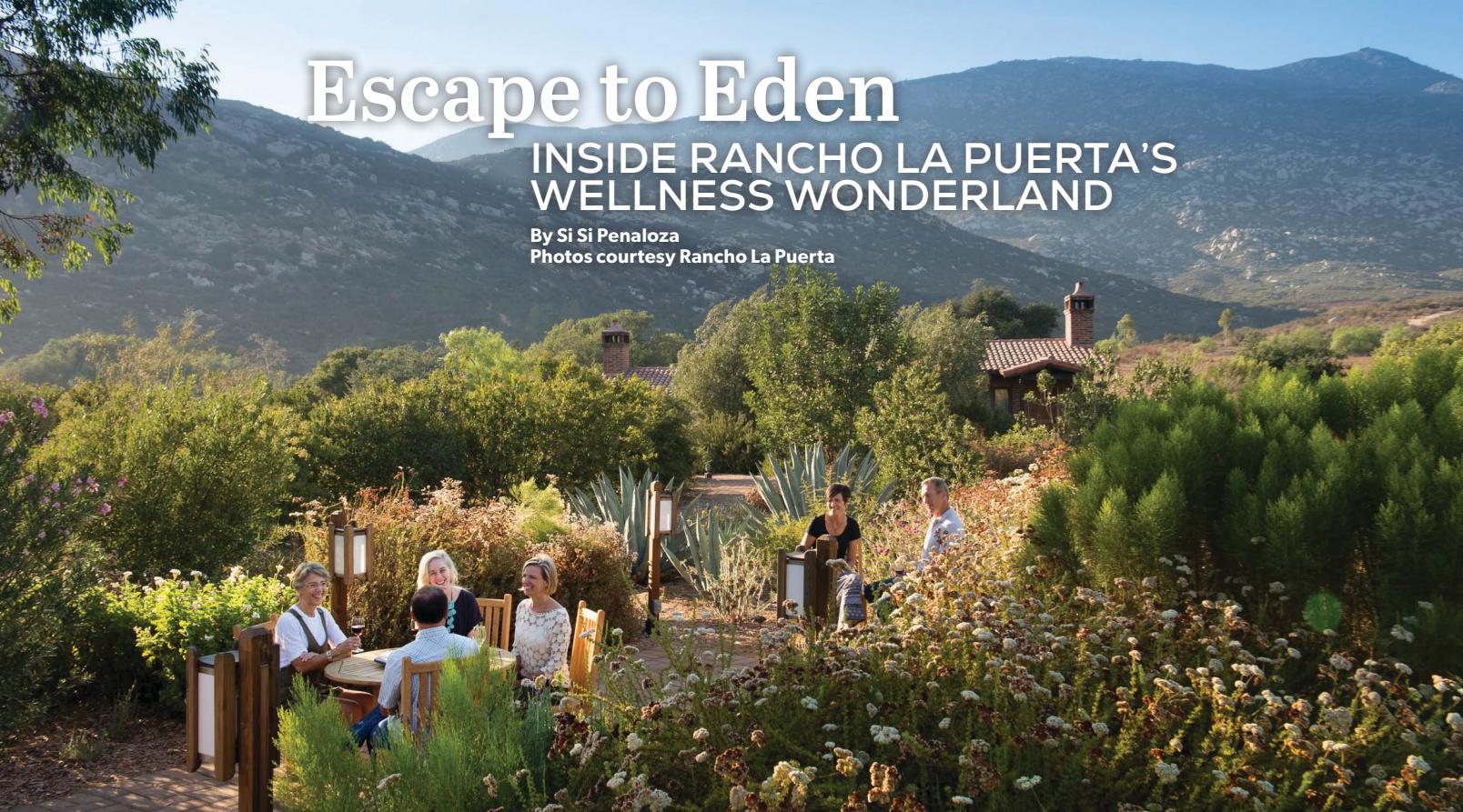


Escape to Eden

INSIDE RANCHO LA PUERTA'S WELLNESS WONDERLAND

By Si Si Penaloza
Photos courtesy Rancho La Puerta



Imagine trading the hustle of South Orange County for 4,000 acres of wildflower meadows, mountain air, and the kind of wellness getaway that would make Sophia Loren weep with gratitude (she was a devotee back in the day). Welcome to Rancho La Puerta, a spa retreat with such high integrity and wellness credentials it's a rite of passage for the enlightened elite.

Nestled in Baja California, just 90 minutes south of San Diego, this retreat feels a world away from the Starbucks-lined streets of Ladera or the sculpted perfection of Rancho Mission Viejo. Rancho La Puerta offers a much-needed reset—where your only concern is whether to hit Pilates or sound therapy first.

Founded in 1940, the Ranch has evolved into a sanctuary for the overworked and the over-it. Its rolling hills, anchored by the 3,885-foot Mount Kuchumaa, create an ambiance of bliss, attracting the likes of Kate Winslet and Madonna. Despite its A-List aficionados, Rancho La Puerta keeps it real, deflecting five-star pretension. There are zero infinity pools with champagne service here. Think terracotta-tiled casitas, colorful embroidered pillows, and enough rustic charm to make you forget about that Wi-Fi dead zone (which, by the way, is deliberate). You'll be discouraged from phone use to embrace a "digital noise-free environment." But let's be real—a week off the grid might be exactly what the doctor ordered.

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The Ranch's daily activities read like a wellness buffet: sunrise hikes, tennis, HIIT, Hydro-Fit, Barre, kickboxing, cycling, salsa, aerial yoga, Feldenkrais and Gyrokinesis. Want to get really wild? Try cardio drumming to wake up your core and spirit animal. And if you're one to wear your Lululemon everywhere, you'll fit right in with guests who spend their days in gym gear, moving from class to class, cocktail-free but cocktail-adjacent in spirit.

Dining here is mostly plant-based, with occasional forays into seafood. Meals—like rainbow lasagna and coconut-crusted tempeh—are as wholesome as the RMV Agrihood and farm-to-table nights at The Ecology Center. A week stay here will leave you with something far more valuable than a tan: serenity, renewal, and a healthier gut biome.

If Rancho La Puerta sounds like a dreamy wellness retreat plucked from the gilded pages of *Town & Country*, it's because it is. This feels like the kind of place where Oprah meditates on the meaning of life after a 7am sunrise yoga—because, well, she does. The massages here—whether it's the indulgent Four Hands experience or the Sacred Moments side-by-side couples—are the stuff of legend. Who needs Wi-Fi when you're getting pampered in a blissfully phone-free zone?

Rancho La Puerta has been drawing in the enlightened for

decades. The original wellness retreat with just the right touch of Old Hollywood glam (Jane Fonda swears by it) and modern-day mindfulness. The ranch itself is a tapestry of Mexican heritage, with colorful casitas tucked among the agave and cacti. With 11 gyms, four pools, and spreadsheets of classes, this is a mecca for fitness enthusiasts who like their workouts served with a side of wilderness and sanctuary. Forget the typical SoCal boutique gym; this is where fitness meets soul.



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