

Ageless Living and a Lifetime of Health

by Susanna May Ad and photos by Center for Ageless Living

I meet Suzette Lindemuth in her upstairs office, part of the soothing, uncluttered set of rooms which house the office staff of the Center for Ageless Living. Before we even begin, I admire the wire torso sculpture hanging in low profile on her back wall. She tells me it's a Randy Cooper original, purchased before he became well-known, and shows me how to create a growing wall shadow with her lamp in order to enhance its beauty and subtle mystique. As we talk, I think her philosophy and life's work are much the same as the sculpture and its shadow—a striking idea which has been expanded and brought to new dimension.

Suzette has a mission. She wants us all to look and feel our best. Sounds simple but the reality is that remaining healthy and productive is a life-long journey which involves body, spirit, nutrition and activity. And for Suzette, Director of the Center, it takes a whole village to make sure the job is done correctly.

And what an amazing village it is. Located on five country acres in Los Lunas, the Center contains every element necessary to meet its goal of feeling healthy and aging gracefully. There are five inter-connecting elements (Spa and Salon, Rotisserie, Senior Living Facilities, Home Care, and Park and Garden) reflected in the five branches of the newly created tree logo, and each part works together to create a greater whole. The Spa and Salon are the newest additions, and they allow the luxury of a spa retreat not twenty miles out of Albuquerque at an affordable price. Featured in the April, 2006 issue of *New Mexican Women*, Suzette is especially committed to helping people feel their best even in later years. "Our long-term goal," she says, "is to promote the concept of aging in a community that supports healing and alternative treatments."

We pass the Green House Rotisserie on the way to the Spa. All the food for the Spa and the assisted living facility is prepared in the Rotisserie's state-of-the-art kitchen, where chefs knead their own bread and prepare healthy, delicious meals. The Rotisserie also offer take-out to the public and provide catering services throughout Valencia and Bernalillo Counties. The take-out menu includes salads, Chic Chickens and 'create your favorite' pot pies. The Spa Menu offers many items such as: Mozzarella Martini salad, Gazpacho, Whole Grain Pasta Salad with Shrimp and Parmigiana, and Chocolate Lava Cake, which I can't wait to try.



Now at the Spa, we pass through smooth doors into a universe designed for peace and relaxation. Every room is clean and calm, and although today is Monday and the Spa is closed, I'm sure it feels this way all the time. The treatment rooms are

large and warm, and there is even a couple's room with a fireplace (Suzette says mothers and daughters love to use it for a day together) and a wet treatment room with a shower next door. The men and women's locker rooms are a Zen experience by themselves, and the bamboo lockers and fresh aromas bring feelings of peace and healing calm. Women using the steam room can move to the Rain Tree shower to cool off, and then relax in the Aroma Therapy Room, drink herbal tea and enjoy the Spa's specially formulated Green Leaf fragrance. There is a consultation room off of the reception area, where therapists can discuss customized therapies.

The Spa offers signature treatments (including grief or loss, arthritis, circulation) which incorporate sound, color and aroma therapies, hot and cold treatments, and essential oils. For example, the upper respiratory treatment helps many people get through



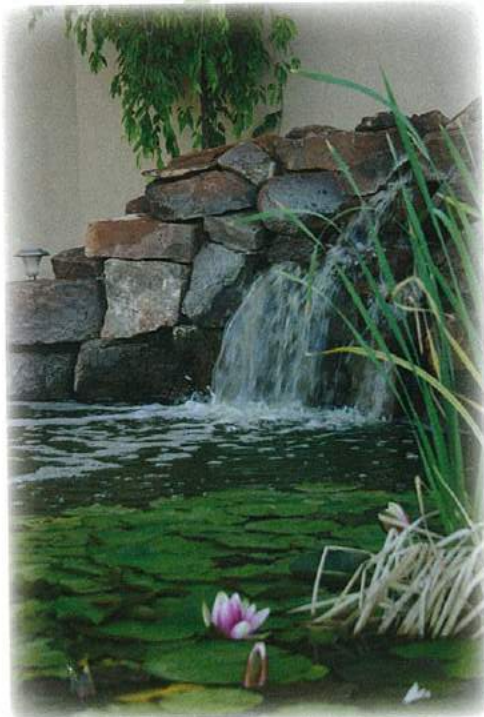
the allergy seasons. There are two hot tubs and a pool, which is heated to a constant 87 degrees with underwater speakers that play gentle music, all using oxygenated well water and bromine to avoid the harsh chlorine experience. Suzette shows me the plant covered living wall, a vertical state-of-the-art filtration system that helps to recycle about 6,000

gallons of water a day.

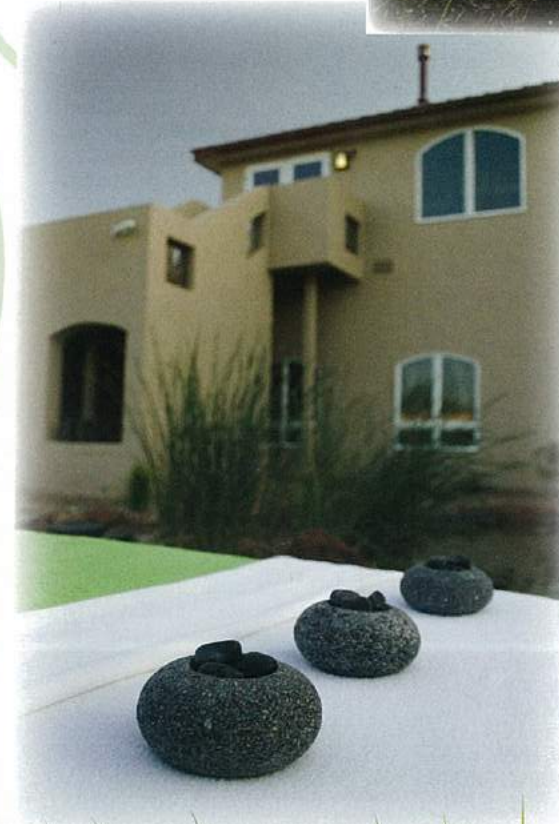
There are several types of Spa memberships available, including the Green Leaf (which offers reduced rates to the spa in exchange for volunteering at the assisted living facility), the Bronze Leaf (unlimited use of facility and one treatment a month) and even a Gold Leaf, limited to thirty people and including three 1-hour treatments a month and discounts on other treatments and cuisine. There is also a Train and Treatment service which will pick up customers at the Los Lunas Rail Runner and take them back after a day of healing and relaxation. Every person receiving treatments at the Spa has unlimited access to the Spa facilities.



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She takes me on a tour so I can fully understand the connections. Before going into a building, we walk by the meditation pond with its blooming lilies and sparkling green water plants. After reflecting quietly, we wander the grounds which make up the Community Park—fruit trees, flower and herb gardens, bridges, performance stage. The produce is harvested and the herbs are used in the Green House Rotisserie. The Park's mission is to have outdoor areas which encourage fun and relaxation while providing produce and herbs to the Center, and the Park and its facilities can be rented by families and community organizations.



Next, we tour the yoga room, whose floating cork floors and muted tones continue the feeling of calm and health and relaxation. Yoga classes are offered throughout the week, and there is even a Viniyoga class on Monday nights. The adjoining salon, also created to provide peace and calm, provides full hair and nail service to complement a wonderful Spa experience.

As I get into my car to drive home, I hear the low chirping of birds and watch the afternoon colors merge and flow and find myself planning the day I will spend here—just as soon as I can manage. This thought calms me as I prepare to drive back to Albuquerque to the cacophony of life with two young boys and a houseful of activity and commotion.