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The Magazine of Naturist Living

**Buff Boondocking**  
**A Santa Fe Super Spa**  
**High Country Hot Springs**  
**Feeling Free at Point Reyes**  
**A Journey to Self-Acceptance**



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DISPLAY TO END OF NOVEMBER



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## TEN THOUSAND WAVES

*A Japanese Spa & Resort in Santa Fe, New Mexico*



Michael Cooney



Michael Cooney

"BLISSFUL" is one way to describe a soak in the Waterfall tub.

Michael J. Cooney

“**M**ORE JAPANESE than you would find in Japan” is how some visitors describe Ten Thousand Waves, a pioneering spa located on a pinyon-covered hillside just outside trendy Santa Fe.

The unusual name derives from the Japanese saying, “One wave, ten thousand waves,” which, roughly translated, means, “It’s all the same, so don’t worry.” This captures well the relaxed, carefree tone of this unique spa, fashioned after the historic hot spring resorts of Japan’s mountain regions. Approaching its 25th year, Ten Thousand Waves (a.k.a. “the Waves”) was a spa before spas were fashionable.

Owner Duke Klauck says he never set out to create a spa, much less an earthly paradise. A Yale graduate with a trust fund and hippie inclinations, Klauck was simply seeking a place to practice calligraphy as part of his deep and continuing study of Japanese culture, when he got an opportunity too good to turn down. A

“When you don’t have any clothes on, it’s very difficult to have any social markers, so people are just people.” —Duke Klauck, owner

drug-dealing friend learned that the feds were on his trail and offered Duke the property at a bargain price. Once Klauck took over and started building and improving the property, one thing just flowed into another.

“Mankind and animals have been using hot springs for thousands of years to heal themselves,” Klauck says. “When you sit out in the middle of the woods in a hot spring, there’s no way you can avoid being touched by something elemental. The Japanese have been plugged into this for hundreds of years, and it’s becoming more accessible to Americans.”

In keeping with the Waves’ Japanese aesthetic, a rippling pond at the entranceway is stocked with colorful koi, offering a hint of the tranquility found within, while at the same time demonstrating

that Asian minimalism combined with western practicality can have a heart.

The sheer size of the parking lot is the first sign that this is not your average spa. Built into the hillside with careful landscaping, it is impossible to stand back and get a total perspective on the facilities. Inside, at the guest service counter, you really begin to get a vision of just how many choices you have.

There are 10 soaking areas, eight private and two communal. Each tub is enclosed, which permits users the choice of being nude both in the tub and while sunbathing on the deck, as well as while using the sauna and cold plunge when available (not all private areas have them). Some tubs have a common cold plunge outside the tub enclosure, which also can be used nude. Both the women's and the communal tubs are clothing-optional most of the day, and are regularly used nude. After 8:10 p.m. each day, swimsuits are required in the communal tub.

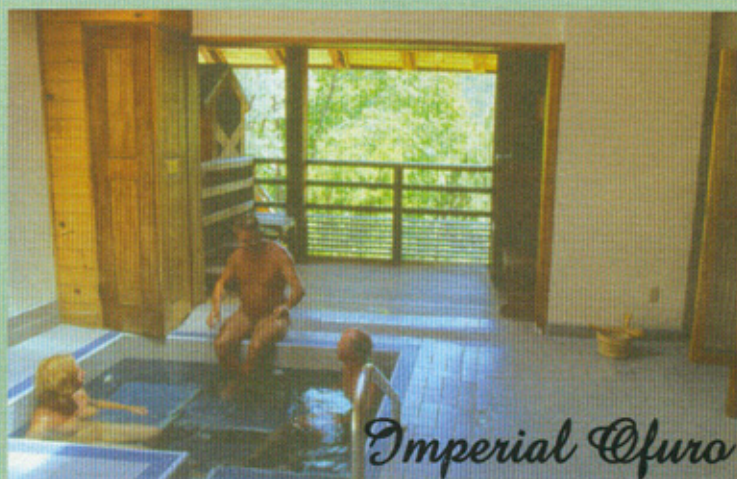
This isn't a naturist resort where you can freely move about the grounds nude; body acceptance is practiced in a manner that accommodates various sensibilities, but the attitude toward the body here is casual and accepting. Guests are offered a kimono and sandals upon arrival, and then proceed to either the treatment rooms or the soaking tubs. So if by chance a nude body is seen heading to the communal cold plunge, management's attitude is, "Oh well."

Ten Thousand Waves has 250 full-time employees, including 130 massage therapists, each of whom has passed a rigorous selection process and works one of three shifts a day. A wide variety of massage styles and treatments are offered, each one carefully designed to meet client specifications about music, touch, and other personal preferences.

The primary reason to visit the Waves, though, is to soak in one of the tubs, which range in size from large and communal to small and intimate. All but one of the tubs are open to the sky and maintained at 104 to 106 degrees. The warm water is not the product of a natural hot spring; rather, the water is heated by gas furnaces and maintained by an odor-free, state-of-the-art sanitation system that uses ultraviolet light, ozone and hydrogen peroxide. The system cycles water through each tub every 25 minutes (a costly process, at more than \$1,000 per tub per month).

## TEN THOUSAND WAVES

*These Are a Few of Our Favorite Tubs...*



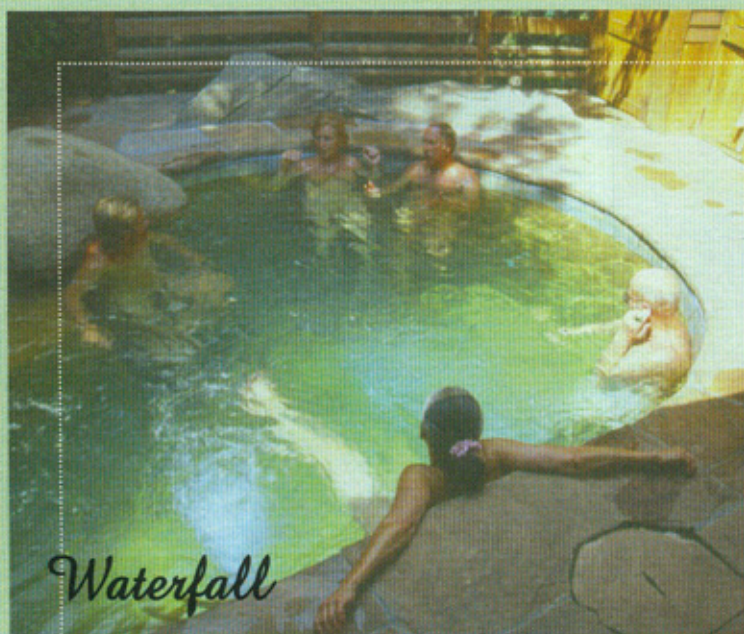
Michael Cooney

**IMPERIAL OFURO.** So stunning when you first walk in, you spend your first moments discovering all the features and admiring the mountain view. This premium bathing suite is under roof but with two open walls, and includes a bathroom, shower, changing room, tile tub, wet/dry sauna and cooling berth, plus a hydraulic lift for handicap access. The suite can accommodate up to 10 guests, with about half in the tub at any one time.



Michael Cooney

**MOON.** One of the "regular" private tubs which hold up to six people, Moon opens to a vegetation-covered hillside, giving the impression of seclusion. An acrylic tub that is maintained at 98 degrees during the hottest months, its name and popularity come from the excellent moonrise view it affords. A shared cold plunge is located just outside of the tub enclosure, but you may want to wait a few moments for your pore-closing experience.



Waterfall

Michael Cooney

**WATERFALL.** Our favorite tub, and the one you would most like to have in your backyard. This premium outdoor tub has the feel of a natural spring and is spacious enough for 12. Maintained at 97-99 degrees and surrounded by a rock deck, the private area also offers a wet/dry sauna and a cold plunge with a waterfall. A 55-minute soak here is \$30 per person, and well worth it.



Kojiro

Deborah Fleigi/Ten Thousand Waves

**KOJIRO.** A premium private tub that is reserved for women from noon to 8:15 p.m. daily, except Tuesday when it opens at 4:15 p.m. The large, polished concrete tub can accommodate 20 and is surrounded by a sunning deck, sauna and cold shower.



Communal Tub

Michael Cooney

**COMMUNAL TUB.** The communal tubs are available at the bargain rate of \$14 per person with no time limit. The public tub is a 10-foot teak hot tub for men and women with a cold plunge, wet/dry sauna, large sunning deck, and a cold shower. The tub area is clothing optional before 8:15 p.m. and clothing mandatory after that. This unique arrangement is intended to encourage visits from locals and families who may be put off by nudity.

Reservations are vital to ensure the services and the tub of your choice. On a typical weekday the spa may have 200-300 guests; on weekends, up to 500; and on holidays, the Waves can bring in as many as 600 or 700 guests, all waiting patiently for their turn in paradise.

Each night 12 lucky guests and their partners get to stay in one of the "Houses of the Moon" guest suites. Ranging from "Zen style" to "Emporer's Class," each suite is superbly executed in a Japanese period style, and each has a unique theme and amenities. All rooms are smoke-free and include phone with voice messaging, mini-refrigerator, microwave, CD player, coffee maker (with gourmet coffee and tea), private outdoor areas with hibachi grills, and access to laundry facilities. Most have fireplaces stocked with fragrant pinyon and cedar logs.

Of course, the thing that always makes a resort or spa experience extraordinary is the attention to detail. Everything you see and feel at the Waves is carefully designed and well crafted. Staff members are thoroughly trained to understand that everything is important about the guest experience; for most guests, that makes the "service" seamless and the experience magical.

Located near the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at an elevation of 7,800 feet, the Waves offers an evening view that is simply spectacular. On a clear night it almost feels like you can reach out and touch the stars from your hot tub. **N**

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