



santa fe magic

With stark beauty that inspired Georgia O'Keeffe, this Southwestern city is a mecca for artists and outdoor enthusiasts — and those looking for tantalizing, unique spas. BY MARGARET PIERPONT

TEN THOUSAND WAVES A visit to this inspired retreat about a 15-minute drive into the mountains from town has become a ritual for Santa Fe visitors and locals alike over its quarter-century evolution. Skiers and hikers stop for a soak in the communal bath on their way down the mountain, and local ladies like to visit the women's bath when the moon is full. There are eight private bathing areas — some with plunge pools, saunas, and waterfalls — holding from six to 20 people. I've enjoyed a romantic soak with my husband in December as snow was falling, as well as a pre-wedding bath with eight female relatives on a balmy June day. If you spend an afternoon or evening there, and follow a bath with a massage or other treatment, you will feel as though you've been away for days. (You can do that, too, by booking one of the four Zen-style lodging rooms at the adjacent Houses of the Moon.) If you want to know how good it gets in Santa Fe, treat yourself to the Masters Massage, 85 therapeutic minutes with one of a select group of the most experienced massage therapists. After my treatment, the moon was rising over the pines, and I was glowing.

A small, enchanting city of adobe houses, high-desert vistas, and scarlet sunsets, Santa Fe, New Mexico, is also home to 4,000 massage therapists. The first spa to tap into the local talent was Ten Thousand Waves (now 26 years old and still going strong), and in the past few years a handful of new spas have opened in long-established hotels and resorts. There are also day spas, of course, but at all of the following, both overnight guests and drop-in visitors are welcome. The first four are within walking distance of the Plaza (the center of the old city), and the last two are only short drives away. As a visit to the area will reveal, the spas of Santa Fe embrace the creative spirit of the city.