

## WEEKEND GETAWAY

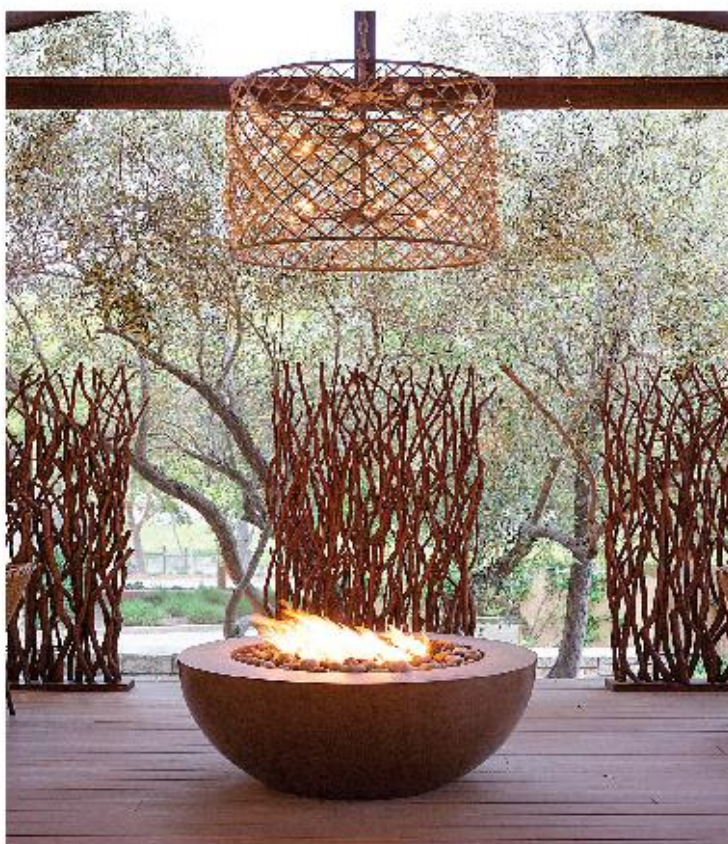
strange taste combo, but which turned out to be superb. There was also a grapefruit ice cream that tasted exactly like sweet grapefruit.

## Other Activities

Golf is my activity, and Bernardus Lodge has a relationship with more than 10 premier golf courses, including Quail Lodge and a couple of private courses. Alissa suggests asking about them upon arrival. There are two tennis courts on site, along with the swimming pool, and an enormous central lawn where bocce and croquet is played; hikes in a nearby park are organized on weekends, and then there is the fabled spa with a full salon and featuring the Eminence line of products. There are nine treatment rooms, a co-ed relaxation room decorated with paintings done by local artist Patricia Qualls, and a small heated pool. Treatments run from a Brazilian Wax to a two-hour Detox Wrap and a Remineralizing Thalasso Bath in a private outdoor tub.

For diversions, there are some 25 boutique winery tasting rooms in the area, often manned by the winemakers themselves, and, well, if vegging out isn't what you really want to do, there are options. Carmel Valley Village is five minutes away, Carmel 15 minutes, and if shopping is your goal downtown Monterey is a 20-minute drive.

And, speaking of vegging out, Chef Cal has his pick of any of the greens, herbs, flowers, and vegetables grown in the two-acre organic garden on the premises. Other pluses are the chef's table in the kitchen (designed by Chef Cal) with a wall of high-profile signatures behind it; the communal table in the restaurant and another in the elegant bar. The lodge is peppered with private and semi-private conversation pits throughout, so there is always



somewhere to sit, often by a fire, and converse. The 24-hour fitness room is replete with new equipment, including six spin bikes, and each setup is supplied with its own TV. Other resort highlights include the 150-bush rose garden, the Mercedes drive program, which sets aside four Mercedes and makes them available to guests; Bernardus Lodge is the closest resort to the Laguna Seca track, so don't even think about trying to rent a room during the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, as they are always fully booked during that week and many of the officials and vehicle owners stay here. Major holidays would also need to be booked ahead in plenty of time.

And why wouldn't they? The weather is almost always perfect, the 9-foot-deep pool awaits, Chef Cal is at the ready behind the line, you'll sleep in luxurious comfort, and serenity is just around the corner. Oh, and if you are in fact there to work, the free Wi-Fi is fast and steady.

*Bernardus Lodge & Spa is located at 415 West Carmel Valley Road in Carmel Valley. Call (831) 658-3400 for more information or visit their website at [www.bernarduslodge.com](http://www.bernarduslodge.com).*