

Fit and Rejuvenated in Beautiful Sedona

By Andrew Freirich

Upon your arrival on Route 179 into Sedona, her majestic crimson red arches, mountains and buttes, spill over onto the crisp royal blue sky with depth and intensity. You instantly feel as if you are entering a sacred place. It's almost surreal. I guess that's why indigenous tribes for over six thousand years inhabited Sedona, and for the same reason, I find myself returning again and again. I am filled with anticipation and excitement, my body ready for the physical challenges and spiritual discoveries ahead. I always have an agenda in mind, though Sedona seems to have her own agenda waiting for me.

Sedona Arizona is located approximately 2 hours North of Phoenix and two and a half hours from the Grand Canyon. At an altitude of 4600 feet, Sedona enjoys moderate weather all year round. Known for its unique beauty, and adobe red rock, it's an ideal place for hiking, walking, mountain biking and golf. Sedona is also known for its renowned cuisine, art galleries and world class Spa's. As one of the seven most spiritual and majestic places on earth, Sedona also attracts visitors from all over the world who make their pilgrimage to feel its special energy and power points known as Vortices (Vortex). Even if you don't feel the energy, its sheer beauty will leave you mesmerized.

My home for the next four days will be the **Enchantment Resort and Mii Amo Spa**. This world-class resort offers 220 rooms and Casitas in traditional adobe-style buildings overlooking the sensational Boynton Canyon. The Enchantment Resort is truly enchanting and the Mii Spa, which was newly built two years ago, is nothing less than miraculous. Mii Amo a native Indian word for "journey" or "passage" reflects the life-enhancing experience of achieving a transformation in physical health, emotional well-being and spiritual renewal. Exactly, what I had in mind. The Enchantment's friendly and kind personnel seem to embody the relaxed peaceful energy that Sedona offers. Each and every need is met with a sincere smile and caring attitude. This was a constant throughout my stay.

The resort is nestled in the canyon, blending in perfectly with its adobe style casitas and buildings. My private casita, overlooking the whole canyon is just steps away from the trails and Mii Amo Spa. Each casita includes a private patio, fire place, sitting room, and first class amenities including an oversized bathroom spa which includes its own Jacuzzi bath.

Mii Amo Spa's architecture blends the southwest, modern, and Asian cultures in perfect harmony. Soft, new age music is heard as your eyes meet a seamless water fall built into a deep blue wall at one side of the Spa's entrance. Cactus flowers with deep purple and burgundy flow in and around the walkways that lead up to the oversized mahogany

doors. All along you get a sense of anticipation of transformation. Mii Amo's reputation as one of the best new spa's in the world is accurate, not only for its sensational setting, but also for its world class menu of spa treatments.

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Mii Amo combined the concept of total and complete rejuvenation of the mind, body and spirit, and created a program, which offers its own private casitas with in the spa. The program offers three, five and seven night packages, which include all meals, and two spa treatments each day per person.

Favorite Past times in Sedona

Mountain biking – I awoke at 5:30 a.m. to watch the sunrise. My eyes were met a spectacular canvas of yellow, orange and red shadows which spread across the canyons walls. In awe of my surroundings on the patio in my private casita, I marveled at the beauty of Boynton canyon and took in its rejuvenating energy of the vortex that encompasses the Enchantment resort and Mii Amo Spa. I reviewed my activities for the day. This morning, I scheduled a mountain bike ride at 7:30 a.m. It would be a 2-3 hour ride, and indicated that only experienced riders should sign up. Not a problem. I had a quick breakfast, got my gear together, lots of water, sunscreen, my camera, and a few energy bars.

At the Spa, five other riders and our guide Scott all gathered. All of us had about the same riding ability, which turned out to be advantageous. We pedaled our way, through some of the most beautiful rugged off-road landscapes surrounded by sagebrush, cactus and mountain ranges, in the heart of Boynton canyon. For three and half hours, we pedaled and climbed our way in and around single-track trails, rock jumping, and turns that kept your heart rate and adrenalin at peak levels. After each difficult climb, we would rest a moment, take in some water and marvel at Sedona's beauty.

Riding in a small knit group such as this, you bond, share stories, and watch out for one another. You become a team, and ride like a team. This new kinship was as enjoyable and fulfilling as the ride. I plan on staying in contact with my new friends.

Hiking Boynton Canyon From the footsteps of Mii Amo Spa awaits one of the most glorious hikes in Sedona. Embedded in Boynton Canyon the trail takes you on a journey on a moderate trail that hovers over the canyon and presents many picture perfect moments. I began my hike at 8 a.m. as the sun was rising over the canyons buttes and arches. At various junctures along the trail, I had to stop and pause just to take in the moment. The second half of the trail leads you into a deep forest filled with Ponderosa Pines, gray deer and a plentiful bird population. Early morning, the rays of the sun filter in and around the trees onto the trail, creating various moods and emotions. About 40 minutes in, I find a rock garden. Fellow hikers traditionally leave a remembrance of their

visit by creating uniquely and distinctive rock piles of various shapes and sizes, one on top of the other. I followed suit, and proceeded to create my own rock art. As I continued my hike, I found a small nest of ponderosa pine needles nestled about 10 feet above the trail and sat there to meditate and be at one with nature. How refreshing, peaceful and satisfying.

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Returning from my three-hour hike, I was completely rejuvenated and ready for the rest of my day and a hearty lunch.

Bear Mountain is regarded as a very strenuous hike that peaks just above 7000 feet. The trail has an 1850-foot ascent. I looked forward to this challenging hike, which from the top presents views of all of Sedona. The trail head starts off winding up and down on a fairly flat surface surrounded by brush and soft dried red rock for about a mile before arriving at the foot of the mountain. From there, you can enjoy 1.5 hours of switch backs, twists and turns, some scrambling, and some amazing views of the valley as you make your way to the top. Even though the trail seems easily marked, it is easy to wander off the main trail at times which at one point in my trek, took me about 300 feet up and in another direction. I found my way back, but in the interim, I experienced some amazing views, found a new peak, and enjoyed the climb. Back on the right trail again, I continued my ascent to the top. It was well worth the effort, and highly recommended. On the way down, I took my time, I enjoy that. It allows me to more closely take in the views and do some introspective thinking. On my descent, I crossed paths with other's and with a silent glance, much was spoken.

Mii Amo Spa Cuisine:

Mii Amo's Spa restaurant and outdoor dining is not only delicious, but also truly relaxing. All guests can virtually dine in their robes, whether you are arriving from sunbathing at the scenic outdoor pool, or from a recent spa treatment. I engaged in this pampered activity frequently, as did the other guests. The menu offers a wide variety of dishes that appeal to the local flavor of the southwest, as well as fresh organic fish, poultry, vegetables and meats. Breakfast, lunch and dinner also feature delicious daily specials. One morning after a strenuous hike, followed by some sunbathing, I enjoyed three dishes that were all skillfully prepared. I began with a succulent appetizer "trio of tuna sushi" followed by a vegetarian chili and concluding with a wild Alaskan salmon sandwich. For dessert, I returned to the pool while I enjoyed a papaya, strawberry and banana smoothie.

Mii Amo Spa treatments

After reviewing the full menu of Spa treatments, I chose two treatments, the Abby Shiro and a Deep Tissue Sports massage. The Abhyanga and Shirodara known, as Abhy Shiro is a traditional Ayurvedic full body massage using two therapists who work in Synchrony.

The Abhy is a light touch massage that gently releases cellular toxins for removal out the body. The end result is a deeply relaxed feeling of well-being. The 60-minute treatment is immediately followed by the Shirodara, which continues with one therapist pouring warm oil on the forehead using a specific pattern, followed by a scalp massage. It is advisable to keep the oils in the hair until the following morning for full effect. "Vata purification". This was my first experience having two therapists working in tandem. It took me longer to fully relax, as attempting to find perfect synchrony was difficult, though in the end, the experience was truly relaxing and cleansing.

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After the treatment, I took in a cold glass of lemon, cucumber water, which is offered and ideal for cleansing and hydration after the treatment.

My second Spa treatment was highly recommended by the Spa director. Tommy would be my massage therapist who had just returned from the Olympic village in Greece. I chose the deep tissue sports massage, to soothe my sore muscles after three days of strenuous hiking and mountain biking. Tommy earned the Gold medal for this massage. Perfect balance, synchronicity and intuition, and I felt like I could literally float out the door. My trip was complete after this experience. I highly recommend you request Tommy if he is available.

Indian History

Sedona was inhabited by the Sinagua, Yavapai and Apache among other tribes for thousands of years. I recommend the Palatki Ruins, which is a 30- minute, drive off road from the Enchantment Resort. Here you will find one of the finest and most extensive collections of rock art dating back 3000 - 6000 years ago.

If You Go

Transportation:

Fly into Phoenix, I flew on America West, (\$220 RT) car rental, (\$22 per day with Thrifty-mid size car) approx. 2-hour drive, Route 10-E, to route 17- to route 179 into Sedona.

Enchantment Resort – Avg. room rate/casita is \$275 per night.

www.enchantmentresort.com, you can also plan a Mii Amo Spa package (3, 5 and 7 day) which includes your own private casita, daily meals, spa treatments and full access to all amenities at the spa. www.miiamo.com

Spa Treatments – Spa treatments, for a 60 minute massage (my deep tissue sports massage cost approx. \$125 plus tip, the Abby Shiro 90 minute massage cost \$265

List of full menu go to www.miiamo.com

Be prepared:

While hiking and mountain biking, bring plenty of water, sunscreen, hat, good hiking shoes, proper clothing that breathes well. Fruit or energy bars. Remember to stay on the trails.

Hiking trails – On this trip, I hiked Boynton Canyon trail, Bell Rock, Bear Mountain, and West Fork at Oak Creek. All memorable and distinctively different. .

www.sedonatrails.com

Mountain Biking – Bikes provided by resort. While mountain biking, I always wear the proper riding pants for extra padding and wear a riding jersey. Trek offers a wide variety of excellent clothing and gear for riding. www.trek.com.

Hiking clothes – I wear Ex-officio for strenuous hiking trips as well as around town. They have mastered comfort, style and efficiency to perfection and offer a wide selection of colors and designs. www.exofficio.com