

BY EILEEN GORDON

Heaven on Earth

Equani Spa brings world-class luxury to the North Georgia mountains at Brasstown Valley Resort.

The new Equani Spa at Brasstown Valley Resort promises pampering aplenty in a magnificent mountain setting that stirs the senses and soothes the soul – and captures the very essence of R&R in the process. Brilliantly conceived by spa designer Robert “Dean” Langdon and managed by Coral Hospitality, Equani offers state-of-the-art services in a spectacular place that’s both tucked away, yet easy to reach. Not just for the ladies anymore, this quintessential spa is equally appealing to couples, as men are now discovering what all the fuss is about.

Spas have become big draws at resorts, adding a whole new level of luxury to the “getaway” experience. Equani Spa is no exception. On a dreamy weekend excursion, I had the pleasure of visiting this world-class facility in the foothills of North Georgia’s Blue Ridge Mountains. Built within the 500 acres of the state’s premier mountain resort, Brasstown Valley, Equani is a stunning addition with the look and feel of the finest spa retreats of the world. And from Atlanta, it was an easy two-hour drive to the property in Young Harris, directly accessed from the interstate.

I had the good fortune of staying in the most amazing amenity on the premises: the spa suite – the only guest room located in the spa itself. It’s VIP all the way, akin to a “high rollers” villa at a lavish casino in Vegas, according to Langdon, who designed it as an afterthought. Built on the top floor of the spa with sweeping views of the beautiful surroundings, the penthouse-style “apartment” features a large sitting room, kitchen area, bedroom and bath – the latter two separated only by a sizable spa tub. The steam shower is like one seen in the movies with a teak bench to sit and enjoy the steam. The half dozen or so shower heads make it hard to actually turn the

water off. The sitting room overlooks a quiet horse pasture and the bedroom, complete with a stone stacked fireplace, opens to a private sun deck above the golf course and lake. The deck is enclosed with a black iron privacy fence with laser-cut panels depicting symbols of the seven Cherokee clans, which are also hand carved on the massive mahogany doors throughout the spa itself.

Indeed, the architectural and design elements throughout Equani are in sync with the historical setting of this native Cherokee Indian region. High ceilings and wide hallways add grandeur to the well-appointed facility.

SPA SERENITY

The heart of the spa is a sunny and spacious relaxation room, where eight spa lounges (with electronic comfort adjustments) nicely accommodate clients between treatments. A huge stone fireplace anchors the space, which also offers a refreshment



PUBLICIST JILL LERNER AND SOUTHERN SEASONS EDITOR EILEEN GORDON ENJOY A MAGICAL WEEKEND AT EQUANI SPA.





area for snacks and beverages, wall-mounted televisions and an outdoor sundeck with chaise lounges. Lunch can be ordered from the spa menu and served during rest periods.

Comfortably wrapped in a plush spa robe, I took full advantage of the range of services, from classic to high-tech, at the recommendation of the spa director. I began with a hot stone massage, a full body massage in which heated black river stones are strategically placed on the spine, back, hands and feet to warm and relax muscles. It was 50 minutes of pure bliss in which I lost all track of time.

Following a languid break in the relaxation room, I was guided to the amazing hydrotherapy capsule, which exfoliates and relaxes the body through steam and water. Though I initially thought it might be claustrophobic, the capsule is designed with a perfectly sculpted bed to support the head, back and body. Your head remains outside of the capsule, which is first filled with steam and later converts to a misting shower. Simultaneously, I was treated to a gentle massaging facial, which included a mask and a series of lovely fragrances, and then culminated in a scalp massage.

Following a healthy and delicious gourmet lunch in the relaxation room, I had my final treatment of the day: a pampering pedicure that left me revitalized from head to toe. Afterward, I simply proceeded up the stairs to my spa suite and rested for hours!

The resort, of course, offers much more beyond the spa,



from championship golf and fishing to horseback riding and nature trails, so guests can do as much or as little as they please. Dining at Brasstown Valley Lodge certainly merits a mention, as well. Embracing its rustic mountain heritage, the lodge offers a bountiful buffet to rival the finest cruise line in the world, served up with an incredible panorama of outdoor beauty.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT EQUANISPA.COM OR BRASSTOWNVALLEY.COM.

