

## the Best of Napa & Sonoma

Six spas that exploit the region's winemaking tradition through vinotherapy, the use of grapes and grapeseeds in treatments *By Gary Walther*

### CARNEROS INN, NAPA

#### A CASE FOR INTELLIGENT DESIGN

CARNEROS IS THE STEPCHILD of Napa and Sonoma, a region of real, not gentleman, farmers that runs across the southern end of both counties. This resort, which opened in 2003 and consists of 86 cottages, is the area's first luxury property—and an instance of necessity mothering invention.

The site was formerly a trailer park. Zoning laws forbade the hotel to build cottages larger than the footprints of the former dwellings, which explains the resort's bungalow-community feel (below, far right), and to put in foundations. That's why the guest units are prefab.

To transform prefab into pretty fabulous, hotel founder Keith Rogal turned to design. On the outside, the cottages are northern California rural, with "board and batten" facades like Napa Valley barns and folksy porches; inside (top), they're a profusion of modern design classics, Eames loungers and Le Corbusier chaises in cowhide among them. (To buy the look, visit Design Within Reach at [www.dwr.com](http://www.dwr.com).) Both Vineyard Suites (828 square feet) and Garden Cottages (420 square feet) have generous outdoor areas, walled off with high corrugated-metal fencing, another tip of the hat to rural Napa. Most important, they live well, although two people in a Garden Cottage could get to feeling snug after a day or two.

The spa feels a bit like a converted barn, more comfortable than luxe (no plunges, small steam rooms). But I had two very good treatments, the delicious, semi-decadent Goat's Butter Wrap (\$130), which includes a goat-butter massage, and the Red Flower Hammam Body Ritual Massage (\$200), a six-step treatment that includes an exfoliation with a lemon-coffee blossom-olive stone scrub and finishes with a vigorous Swedish massage using fig and tangerine butter. (Historical irony: The grandson of the trailer-park owner is a therapist here.)

The public buildings, which crown a hill, form a kind of town square, with a gorgeously sited pool (above left) as its



piazza. Their interiors have the same blue-blazer timelessness that the guest rooms do.

By the time you read this, the resort will have almost completed a major expansion: 17 two-bedroom suites, 100-seat restaurant, major fitness center including a 3,000-square-foot cardiovascular center with retractable walls, swimming pool and hot tub, yoga studio, lots of meeting space, 24 homes (for sale), and provision for a farmer's market. The fitness center is much needed: The present one consists of four machines (treadmill, stair-stepper, elliptical, and, oddly, Pilates Reformer) in a broom-closet cottage. However, there's no question that this is going to be a big resort, in fact and in feel, when it's done.

Rates: \$455-\$1,250

Reservations: 707-299-4900

Website: [www.thecarnerosinn.com](http://www.thecarnerosinn.com)