

# american spa

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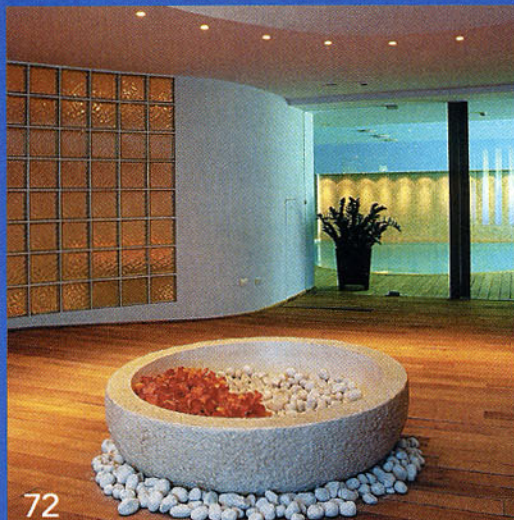
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The Mission Inn, which occupies an entire city block, blends architectural styles and ornamental details, incorporating design features from the southwestern U.S. and several Mediterranean countries.

# History in the Making

Duane and Kelly Roberts offer their guests at the historic Mission Inn an ideal destination for relaxing in Riverside, CA.



Kelly Roberts is the visionary behind Kelly's Spa, the Italian-themed haven at the Mission Inn.

**WHILE IT MIGHT BE A BIT OF AN OVER-**statement to say that Duane and Kelly Roberts saved the town of Riverside, CA, it can easily be said that the couple saved something near and dear to the hearts of the residents. A national historic landmark hotel, the Mission Inn, located about 55 miles east of Los Angeles, has been a favorite destination

of presidents, royalty, and movie stars since it was built by Frank Miller in 1902. Famous guests have come and gone over the years, ranging from former

president Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 to George W. Bush, who visited the hotel in 2003 during a meeting with Arnold Schwarzenegger. Originally a four-story U-shaped hotel enclosing a large central courtyard, the Mission Inn had several wings added on over the next 30 years until it occupied a full city block. After Miller's death in 1935, the hotel began a slow decline due in part to The Great Depression and a shift in tourism. For the next 20 years, ownership of the Mission Inn changed several times, and as a result, the hotel suffered

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The private spa villas offer a romantic escape for couples wanting to unwind together.

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neglect. In 1976, the Riverside Redevelopment Agency purchased the Inn but closed it again in 1985 for what was to be a two-year renovation. Just weeks before the scheduled reopening, the Inn's owner/developer filed for bankruptcy. "After the bank foreclosed, the Mission Inn went through a period of disrepair," explains Duane Roberts. "It was really horrible to see it surrounded by a chain-link fence. It was like a black cloud over the city of Riverside because it had been the heart and soul of the community for so many years."

In late 1992, Duane Roberts, who had a childhood dream of owning the Mission Inn, negotiated the purchase, and exactly seven-and-a-half years after it closed, the Mission Inn was once again opened to the public. "The day after our gala opening, the city had a presentation on Main Street and about 10,000 people came out to cheer," says Duane. "The people went wild when I went up to say a few words. I couldn't believe it. I felt like I was running for president."

Meanwhile, Duane's wife, Kelly, was working on a dream of her own. "I have always been a spa aficionado," says Kelly, who often travels the world experiencing new spa treatments and products. "I wanted to offer guests at the Mission Inn, as well as

local residents, the best treatments, therapists, and products out there." And so, after much planning, **Kelly's Spa** at the Mission Inn opened in May 2004. "We had been thinking about the spa long before we built it, but it just took awhile to execute another project," explains Kelly. The spa was an immediate hit with both hotel guests and locals alike. In fact, it was such a success that just two years after opening, the spa underwent a 1,000-square-foot expansion.

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Guests can soak up the sun while relaxing and enjoying a refreshment outside the two private spa villas.





A warm color palette of gold accented with green and terra cotta, seen here in the Relaxation Lounge, can be found throughout the spa.

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Currently 7,000 square feet, the expanded spa now features 12 treatment rooms, including two private villas that can be used for couples or small groups, two rooms for therapeutic baths, a nail salon, a unisex relaxation room, and a women's-only relaxation room. Inspired by Tuscan villas, the Italian-themed spa features archways and a domed and barrel-vaulted ceiling glowing in the rich gold tones of Venetian plaster. Hand-painted frescos on the walls, marble mosaic flooring, and warm-toned woods are found throughout.

As for the menu, Kelly consistently updates it with new treatments and products she experiences

while traveling. "What I try to do in my spa is very similar to what Frank Miller did more than one hundred years ago when he built our hotel," explains Kelly. "He would bring treasures from all over the world back to the Mission Inn for guests to enjoy. I do the same thing with my spa. I incorporated all of my favorite things into Kelly's Spa, and I continue to do that on a regular basis. I like to keep it interesting."

According to Kelly, the spa is usually at full capacity Thursday through Sunday. Many clients come from the surrounding areas, such as Orange County, San Diego, and Los Angeles. During the week, the majority of hotel guests are businessmen, and Kelly's Spa works hard to attract them. Also, says Kelly, the spa caters to countless brides and bridal parties throughout the year. With two chapels, the Mission Inn has always been a favorite destination for weddings, including ceremonies for Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart, and Richard and Pat Nixon. Last year alone, Kelly estimates the Inn held more than 350 weddings.

In addition to finding ways to constantly improve the spa, Kelly recently launched Kelly's Fountain of Youth Signature Collection, an eight-product skincare line that is used during treatments as well as sold retail. "I have always been very interested in skincare, and I have tried practically everything in the world," says Kelly. "I wanted to create my own line based on ingredients that I think benefit the skin the best."

With the addition of Kelly's Spa, the Mission Inn now has all the components of a destination resort, including luxurious accommodations, fabulous cuisine, a relaxing pool area, and more than 100 years of history and culture. "The Mission Inn has such a colorful and fascinating history," says Kelly. "It is a cultural symbol that represents the acclaim and importance that Riverside once had and is now regaining."—**Nanci McArdle**