



Summer Charm

The Chateau at Lake La Quinta

BY GREG ARAGON

I always dreamed of staying in a French chateau, sipping wine beside a serene lake. And while I knew this day would come, I didn't think it would be in the Palm Springs desert. But this is exactly what I discovered on a recent getaway to The Chateau at Lake La Quinta, the only lakefront hotel in the Palm Springs area.

Located in the small resort community of La Quinta, The Chateau is a chic boutique hotel with 24 guest rooms, including two private bungalows, a gourmet restaurant with full bar, and a pool and jacuzzi. Set on beautiful Lake La Quinta, the resort is designed like a European manor and features rolling lawns with lush gardens and numerous outdoor nooks to sit and relax beside the water and take in the beauty.

My recent rendezvous at The Chateau began when a friend and I checked into a gorgeous suite overlooking the lake. Like all Chateau rooms, ours boasted complimentary Wi-Fi, designer furnishings, a comfy king bed, fireplace, giant flat screen TV, mini-fridge and coffee pot. It also came with a luxurious bathroom with upscale tiling, a two-sink vanity, and a huge soaking tub with a separate walk-in shower.

The highlight of the 425 sq-ft of room was the patio, overlooking the lawn and the 25-acre man-made lake. From here, we sipped wine and watched small boats sail past and enjoyed the warm desert



— Courtesy photo

wind. When we wanted a closer look at the water, we climbed in one of the mini-cabanas lining the lake's edge and got great views of swimming turtles and fish such as blue-gill, catfish and bass.

Beyond the room, one of our favorite spots at the resort was the pool area. Tucked in the corner of the property, with stunning views of the Santa Rosa Mountains, the pool is heated and has lots of deck chairs for sunbathing and a couple large cabanas for relaxing in the shade.

When it came time for dinner, we experienced Melange, the Chateau's signature restaurant. Led by Chef Nestor Ruiz, *Mélange* showcases California family farm-sourced ingredients and offers a menu of classic and contemporary dishes, all with a side of lakefront charm.

Our meal at Melange began with a fresh crab cake appetizer, with Maryland-styled

jumbo lump crab, served with dijon mustard burre blanc sauce. While eating, we had a couple Bloody Mary's from the bar and absorbed the classy, modern décor of the restaurant.

For the main course I devoured the Ahi Tuna Crab Stack, with cajun-spiced Ahi tuna, lump crab, garlic risotto and sautéed spinach. My friend enjoyed a succulent Newport farm-raised pork chop, served with sweet corn, red and green peppers, mashed potatoes and fresh apple brandy demi-glace. For dessert, we split a decadent and delicious cheesecake.

Back at the room, we watched the last rays of the sun reflect off the water and concluded the evening on the patio with a glass of wine and a warm desert breeze.

In the morning, we had breakfast on the outdoor patio at Melange. Against the ever-present backdrop of the shimmering lake, I had a *Mélange* Frittata with eggs, veggies, mozzarella cheese, and breakfast potatoes, while my

friend had Huevos Rancheros with eggs over blue corn tortillas, topped with tomato-chili sauce, refried beans and sliced avocado.

Summer is great time to visit The Chateau. Though it can be a little hot outside, the surrounding mountains, palm trees and resorts, have a way of putting one in a rest and relaxation mode. And The Chateau, with its lakefront location, is the epitome of this. If you want to get away from the crowds and relax in air-conditioned luxury or by a pool with great views and cold margaritas, this is the place.

The resort is currently offering a Desert Nights Package which includes a daily \$50 Chateau Food and Beverage credit and no resort fee. Rates start from \$149.

The Chateau at Lake La Quinta is located at 78120 Caleo Bay, La Quinta, CA 92253. For more information or current specials and reservations, call (888) 226-4546 or visit: www.thechateaulakelaquinta.com