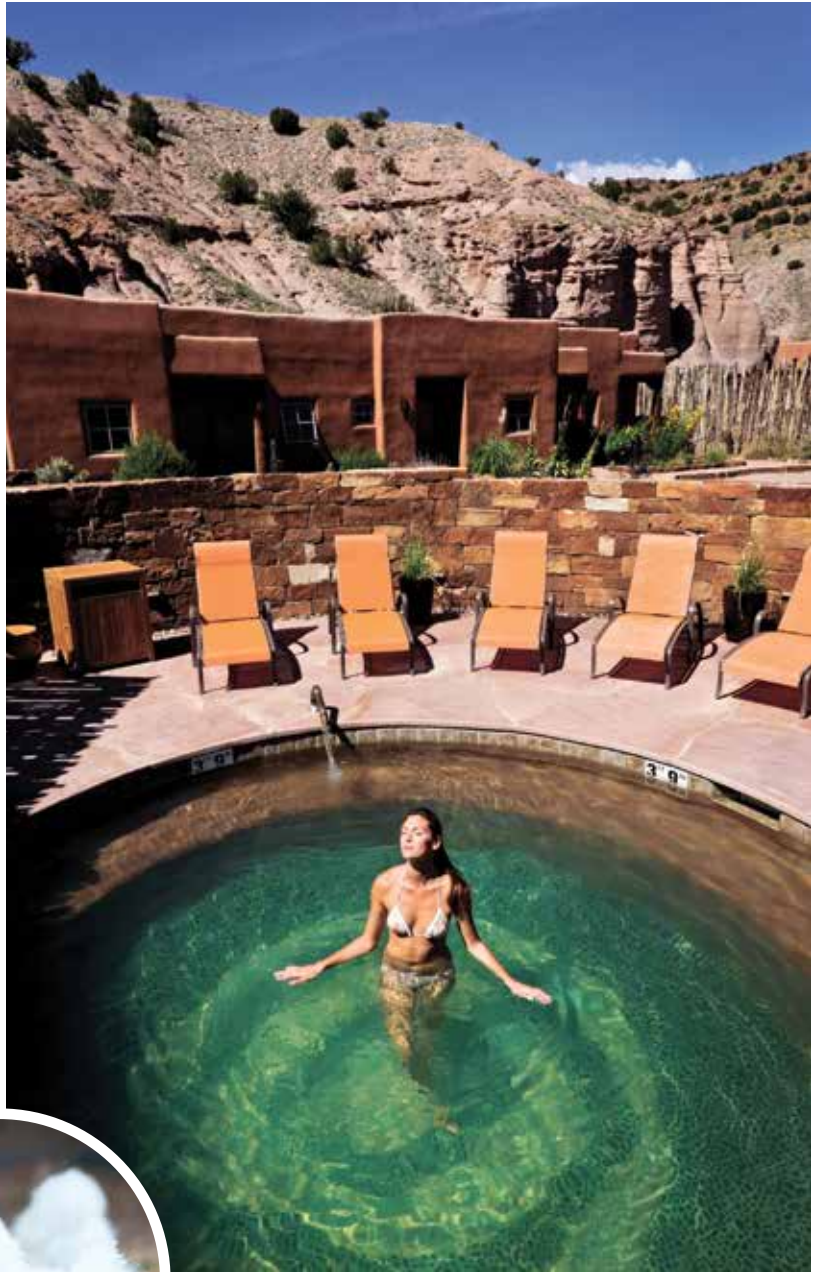


# ADVENTURE

DEPARTURES



**RELAX!** Clockwise from above: natural gardens, an Ojo pool, yoga at Sunrise, a Silkie, a Sunrise room; opposite, an Ojo cliffside pool



SUNRISE SPRINGS SPA RESORT; OJO CALIENTE MINERAL SPRINGS RESORT & SPA

## The Wizards of Aaah's

Brush up on the three R's—rest, relaxation and rejuvenation—at New Mexico's Sunrise Springs and its sister spa, Ojo Caliente

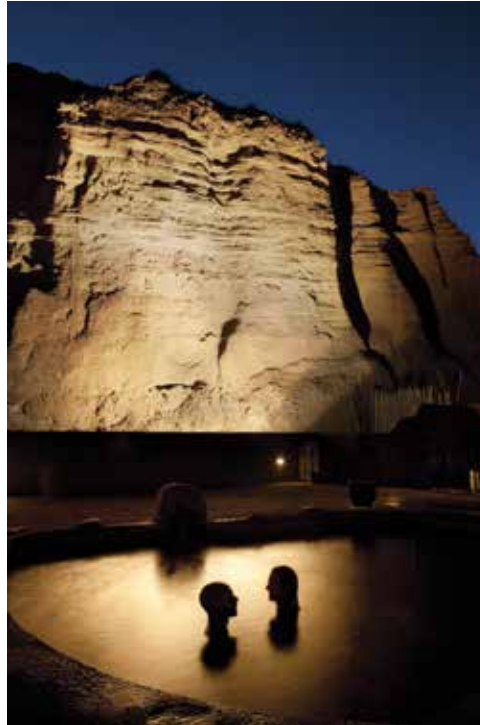
BY ALISON GWINN

It's 130 degrees—my hair's so hot I feel like it could spontaneously combust—and so dark I can't see my hand in front of my face. But I love it. I'm seated inside a small stone wickiup at Sunrise Springs Spa Resort in Santa Fe, participating in my first-ever sweat lodge ceremony, a Native American spiritual purification ritual in which eight of us are encircling a sacred fire pit and opening up about everything from our childhoods to our dreams for the future. We are literally sweating the big stuff.

The prayerful ceremony is central to the mission of Sunrise Springs, a 70-acre oasis whose natural cold springs have made it a resting place for travelers for centuries. Today, the resort, set at 5,932 feet amid the Sangre de Cristo and Ortiz mountains (10 minutes from the Santa Fe Airport), honors that tradition with a menu of wellness services catering to both body and soul.

We're staying in one of the resort's 20 modern but earthy casitas, enjoying a private courtyard and the best night's sleep imaginable. We've begun our stay with an enlightening session run by psychotherapist Michael Schroeder in the Medicine Wheel, a large outdoor circle whose four compass points represent harmony among mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being. Schroeder, who meets with guests to discuss issues from stress to parenting to life goals, provides a wonderful introduction for the activities to come.

Those include engaging in "puppy play" with young dogs training to go onto careers with Assistance Dogs of the West; hanging out with the resort's Silkies, the "zennest" barn fowl imaginable; and trying our hand at two sports known for their stillness: archery and fishing in the resort's pond. On our last morning, we even get to create our own tea blends from more than two dozen herbs and spices in a kitchen next to the greenhouse. We also have a nutrition session with the resort's M.D., Dr.



Sally Fisher, a warm, engaging fount of knowledge who offers sessions on everything from gut health to stress and relaxation. There's no need to leave the resort for meals; the award-winning Blue Heron restaurant, run by executive chef Rocky Durham, serves up healthy, creative cuisine, often using produce from Ojo Farm.

No spa visit is complete without some nurturing of the body, too. We enjoy early-morning yoga, a dip in the saltwater swimming pool and a soak in the private open-air soaking baths. After the relaxing bath session, we make our way to the spa, which offers a variety of therapeutic massages and rejuvenating skin therapies (I had the "Youthful Glow," but next time I want to get the "Native American Blue Corn & Prickly Pear Salt Scrub").

Next up: Sunrise Springs' sister resort, Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs Resort and Spa, an hour-and-a-half drive away. Like Sunrise, Ojo is located near natural waters:

hot springs used since ancient times by a variety of peoples. Ojo will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, making it one of the country's oldest natural health resorts.

Many Ojo guests are day visitors, but we opt to stay overnight in a Cliffside Suite, with our own private tub and access to a kiva pool. After a healthy breakfast in Ojo's Artesian restaurant, we take an easy hike on a nearby trail (ask for a map at the reception desk) and then indulge in Ojo's famed 100,000 gallons a day of steaming mineral waters, which bubble up from underground and are known for their one-of-a-kind combo of four sulfur-free substances: arsenic, iron, soda and lithia, each beneficial in a specific way.

We make our way from pool to pool, where there is not a cellphone in sight and fellow guests are respectful of this sacred "Whisper Zone" space. Even the mud bath, where we slather on caramel-colored muddy water from a tap, allow the mud to bake onto our skin in the clean air, and then bathe it off, is serene. Afterward, we visit the spa, which often uses its own Round Barn Apothecary products, made of ingredients harvested from the area. My daughter opts for a Moisture Quench facial and Reflexology Foot Therapy. For me, it's the unforgettable "Ancient Echoes," an East Indian massage of the upper back, shoulders, arms, scalp, face and feet.

As I stroll blissfully out of the treatment room, I pass a fellow spa-goer emerging from her own session. "Lordy!" she says. I couldn't have put it better myself. **DLM**



### NEED-TO-KNOW INFO

#### SUNRISE SPRINGS SPA RESORT

242 Los Pinos Road, Santa Fe,  
New Mexico / 800.704.0531  
[sunrisesprings.ojospa.com](http://sunrisesprings.ojospa.com)

#### OJO CALIENTE MINERAL SPRINGS

50 Los Banos Drive, Highway 414,  
Ojo Caliente, New Mexico  
800.222.9162 / [ojocaliente.ojospa.com](http://ojocaliente.ojospa.com)

**WE ENJOY EARLY-MORNING YOGA, A DIP IN THE SALTWATER SWIMMING POOL AND A SOAK IN THE PRIVATE OPEN-AIR SOAKING BATHS.**