

Our Puerta Privada Experience An Incentive To Remember

By Maralyn D. Hill



Norm & Maralyn Hill
on Terrace





Walking to Joya Spa

Our one night incentive at the Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia was more than expected. Arizona is noted for its Mexican/Spanish heritage. This Omni Resort goes even further by adding a Moorish-inspired touch of Andalusia, Spain.

For Omni Montelucia, located at the base of Camelback Mountain, the phrase "Montelucia," translating approximately to "mountain light," was appropriate. We checked in early afternoon to enjoy the property before our Puerta Privada Experience.

Our anticipation had been building, as we were contacted ahead of time to see our preferences on massage therapists and then came a call from Chef Tom. He wanted to check the menu to see what our likes and dislikes were. Neither of us were sure what to expect. Now, believe it or not, we got another call with a secret password to use when we arrived at the Castilian-style doors. All of this added to the intrigue.



Joya Spa Palace Suite for our Privada Experience

Our experience was not to start until seven-thirty, so around three in the afternoon, we checked out Crave Café for some of its homemade delicious gelato before heading to the adult pool.

The bewitching hour was approaching, as the sun was starting to rest over Camelback Mountain. Even though we've been married twenty-four years, we felt romantic, lovely, and smiling like a Cheshire cat as we knocked on the large wooden doors, provided our password and entered a world of intrigue.

Our butler led us up the staircase where we each put a stone in the fountain and made a wish. In this deeply peaceful environment, the massive crystal drew us near. As we both placed our hands on it, we took deep breaths to prepare for what was next.

As we ventured down the hallway and the doors opened, we were overwhelmed by the exotic beauty and old-world charm of our spa suite. This spacious hideaway was accented with candles, antique lamps, plush pillows and Moroccan antiques.

Our butler showed us around the suite and the terrace outside. It featured a private pool which lights the air, a telescope to look at the stars, an iPad with an app to

discover all the constellations, and the table where we would enjoy our dinner.

Back in our suite, our butler introduced us to our two massage therapists, Abigail and Angie. They had us change into our robes and slippers and relax for fifteen minutes before our massages.

As we rolled around the bed, tossing pillows out of the way to be close, we appreciated the quiet, peace, no phones, and joy of just being with each other and savoring the moment. At eight promptly, Abigail and Angie returned to start our massages that were suited for each of us individually. First from a chart of flowers, we picked our favorite and they let us smell the oil to match. Norm's was right on target and Maralyn's needed to be adjusted, and then we were in for an hour of sheer bliss where all worries and cares melted away. We'd never experienced a couples massage before and sharing this quiet and peaceful time with a soft jazz/blues music in the background was magic.

At nine, our massage was over, but we still had more to come. We chose to change and enjoy dinner in our regular clothes, but we could have remained in our robes, as the terrace was ours.

The exquisite flavors of our Spanish-

IN-CEN-TIVE, *noun*, something inciting to action or effort, as the expectation of reward or the fear of punishment; adjective, inciting and motivating.

The above definition is from Webster's Dictionary. I would cross out "the fear of punishment," as I have only witnessed positive results from incentive programs, whether individual, group, small or large.

For more than three decades, I wrote and was involved with incentive programs. Seeing results produced were phenomenal. Some were over-the-top luxurious and others were individual rewards.

Luxe Beat Magazine is encouraging the following

- **Readers, please consider sharing the best incentive program you've experienced.**
- **CVBs and Tourism Bureaus, send us a list of 8 to 12 reasons why your destination is an ideal incentive destination.**
- **PR firms and individual properties, same criteria as CVBs and Tourism Bureaus.**
- **Cruise Lines, same criteria as CVBs and Tourism Bureaus.**
- **Individual attractions, tell us why you are so special.**

With destinations, we will break cities down to different tier cities. We encourage you to have some individual attractions. Provide us with reasons why experiencing what they offer is special. The goal of companies running incentive programs is for participants to walk away with positive unforgettable experiences.

We will be looking for the ideal incentive and board meeting locations and you can help us find them. You may wonder why I lumped board meetings in with incentives. Simply, because board meetings are frequently as luxurious as incentive programs.

If you want us to do a full feature on your destination or property, you'll have to bring one or two of our contributors out to cover your property. If you want to be part of the general overview, then we will just need your lists and photos. It would help to have some quotes from those who have endorsed you.

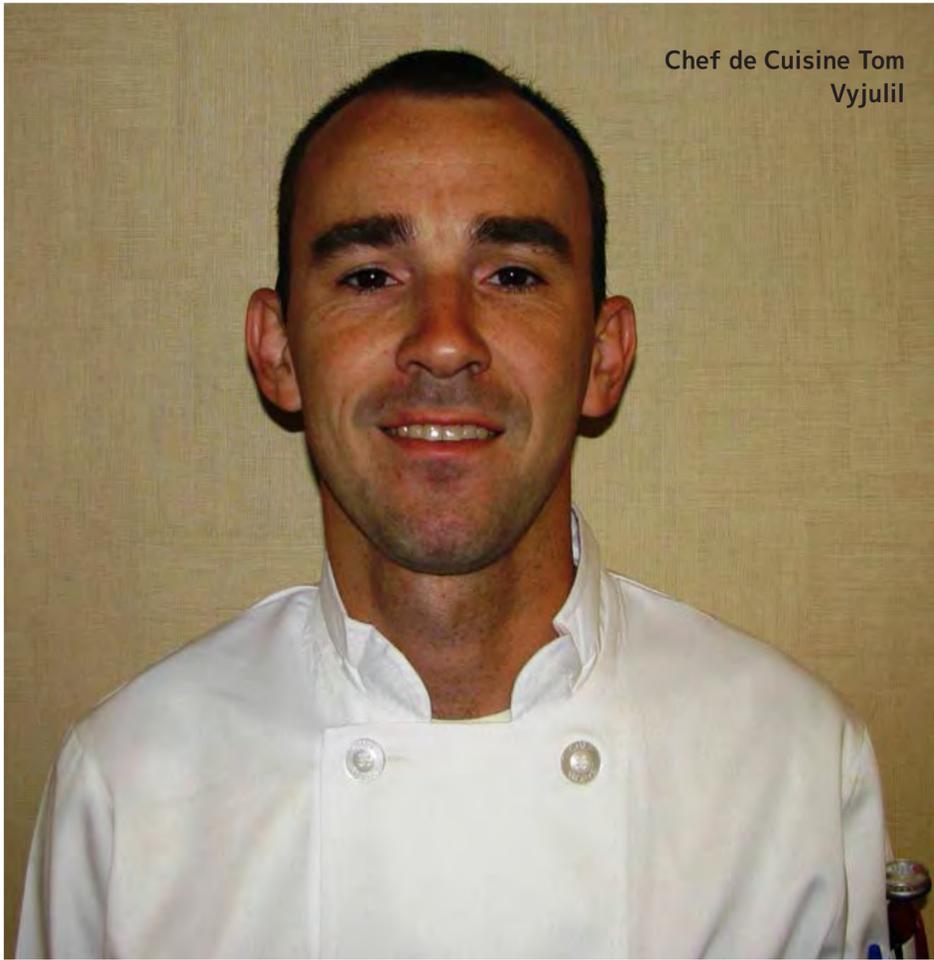
Luxe Beat Magazine realizes that our readers want real experiences and not fluff. We are pretty good at reading through the fluff. We also know, we will be able to provide more insight when you pitch in and share your knowledge.

This article from our August 2014 issue is certainly an example of a luxury incentive destination, Summer Has Arrived At The Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe as well as either of the Raffles properties featured in Raffles Extraordinary Luxury Expected, which was published in November 2013. Most business people understand that incentive programs are not a line item budget expense. They are based on a percentage of increased sales over the past year. That increase also covers some additional profit. In addition, people who are trying to achieve the incentive but don't, are adding to the fund. That is usually where expenses are covered for home office personnel who accompany the program. Those who achieve the incentive in the U.S. usually receive 1099s. The following year, the target for the incentive program is set higher for sales goals, hence a greater profit margin.

Sales meetings are handled in a different manner.

So, to all of our readers, help us incentivize you with ideas and please share yours.





Chef de Cuisine Tom Vyjulil

influenced meals came to life, starting with our champagne toast. Our first course and wines paired well to accompany each. In a moment, we will share our customized menu, but before, you need to know we dined at our own pace. We could ring for our butler if we wanted to speed up the pace or relax and take more time to slow things down.

Toasting each course, let us celebrate a different aspect of the experience. We enjoyed playing with the iPad and finding constellations in the sky around Camelback Mountain between each course.

Chef de Cuisine, Tom Vykulil, also came out and introduced himself, before, during and after the meal. Everyone wanted to be sure we were satisfied.

Our Menu

Duo Appetizer

Gina's Burrata (Balsamic Reduction, Heirloom Tomatoes)

Woodfired Australian Lamb (Mint Crème Fraiche)

Paired with Chandon Rose

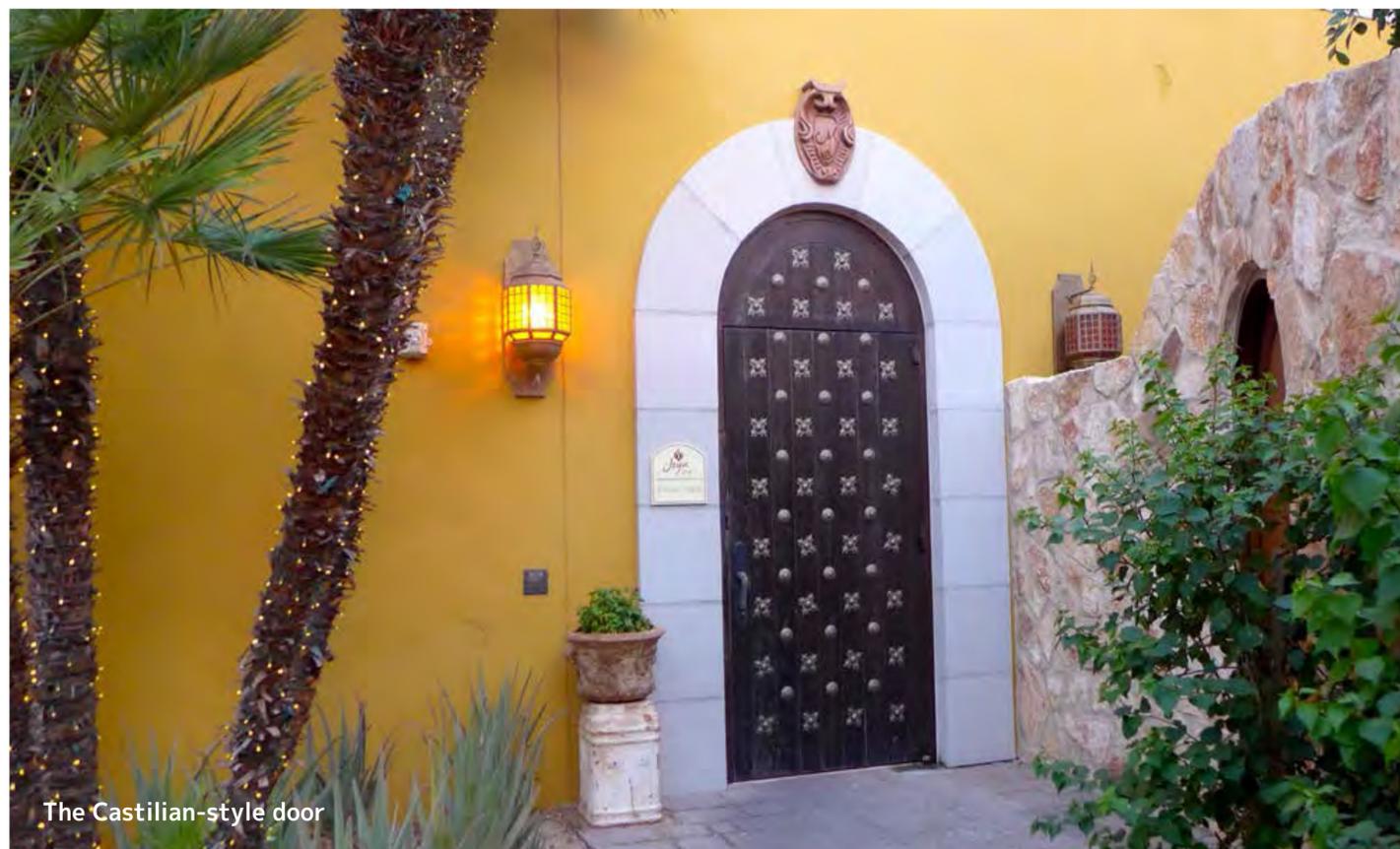
Entrée

Prosciutto Wrapped Jumbo Shrimp, Seared Scallop, Chickpea, Kale, Lemon Salad



Duo Appetizer
Image Maralyn D. Hil





The Castilian-style door

Paired with Frog's Leap Sauvignon Blanc

Duo Dessert

Baby Baci (Chantilly Cream and Ganache)

Dolce & Salato (Vanilla Gelato, Caramelized Bananas, Cherries, Bacon, Whipped Cream)

Paired with Saved Zinfandel Blend

For both of us, the lamb chop was a real winner, but the entire meal is

one we will never forget.

When we finished our meal, we sat back and relaxed. No one rushed us, including ourselves. It was late for us to finish dinner. But, we were so comfortable, we just wanted to enjoy the surroundings. We were looking over the pool, out to Camelback Mountain, which still shows up clearly in the dark. One of the topics of our discussion was just how much we enjoyed this extraordinary experience.

Neither of us are known for relaxing

easily or often, and yet our Puerta Privada Experience at the Omni Montelucia achieved its goal in having that happen.

When we walked back through our beautiful suite before exiting the spa, we walked hand in hand down the staircase to return to our lovely room. Our evening was romantic, memorable, relaxed, rejuvenating and beyond anything we ever expected. Thank you, Omni Montelucia, for having us be one of your guests to initiate this wonderful program.



Our room with view of Camelback Mountain