

Arizona Dreaming

NATIVE AMERICAN INSPIRED TREATMENTS AT THE WILLOW STREAM SPA

BY LISA ARCELLA

The Willow Stream Spa is set in the middle of one of America's most beautiful resorts, but once you begin to unwind within the walls of this desert oasis, you'll never have the desire to go outside its lovely cocoon.

The AAA Five-Diamond, Fairmont Scottsdale Princess is about a 30-minute drive from the Phoenix airport and sits on the rim of the Sonoran Desert with the purple McDowell Mountains as its backdrop.

The resort, known for its world-class golf courses, has 651 guestrooms, and casitas are spread out in various little terra cottas, Spanish inspired neighborhoods. Most of the luxuriously appointed rooms are on a first or second level and open up onto courtyards and streaming fountains or offer views of the mountains beyond. There are four pools, (one has the longest resort water slide in Arizona) and four top-notch restaurants. After a few hours, it's easy to see why the resort has earned membership in The Leading Hotels of the World.

But it was the spa that was calling our name. Willow Stream is a Fairmont signature at a number of their hotels, but in Arizona, the

Willow Stream design was inspired by the Havasupai waterfalls, deep within the Grand Canyon. The hidden sanctuary is believed to have restorative powers by Native Americans.

It's the spirit of the Havasupai waterfalls that this spa recreates. The stone exterior is built to replicate the sandstone that is at the waterfall and there is even an outside cascade of warm, inviting water to stand underneath. The mock waterfall has varying degrees of force, to soothe even the tightest muscles.

Inside there's a pretty open-air atrium to enjoy a spa lunch (not the place to chow down if you have a big appetite!), a rooftop swimming pool and various treatment rooms—some of which have private outdoor patios which allow you to get a fantastic massage in the open air.

Each spa experience at Willow Stream begins with their signature and oh-so-relaxing footbath. Then begins the treatment of your choice: The 90 minute Arizona Aloe Body Wrap or the Find Your Energy Body Experience that removes aches and pains and restore energy. The spa also offers Thalasso Kur, various body polish and scrubs, aroma and mineral baths, plus various facials, massage and salon services.

I was particularly interested in the treatments inspired by Native

American healing, so I chose the 120 minute Havasupai Body Oasis Experience (\$279). My soft-spoken therapist Linda took me to a room with a private patio and began my footbath with a story about her own journey to the Havasupai Falls and the life of the Native Americans who live there. I sipped herbal tea and inhaled lavender from a cool cloth that had been wrapped around my neck to help expand my breathing. Then, in my bathing suit, I was led to the waterfall to relax with my own thoughts under the flowing waters.

Using herbs and flowers typically used in Native American healing, I traveled indoors to a therapy room and received a gentle Chamomile exfoliation, followed by a Eucalyptus herbal bath. Linda explained that the bath was meant to replicate the clarity that travelers often feel when they visit the sacred falls.

That treatment was followed by an aromatherapy wrap combined with face and scalp acupressure treatments. Finally, a soothing warm oil massage was applied to my entire body.

At this point, to say I was relaxed is a huge understatement. I was floating on air and begging Linda to never leave me!

A few hours later, sitting poolside in the Arizona sunshine, I decided that I had indeed had a spiritual experience and the world seemed focused and carefree. **BE**

For more information on Willow Stream call 800-441-1414 (www.willowstream.com)

Other Arizona spas that incorporate Native American inspired treatments:

The Spa at Camelback Inn in Phoenix (www.camelbackinn.com) 800-922-2635

Mii amo at The Enchantment Spa in Sedona (www.miamo.com) 888.749.2137

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