

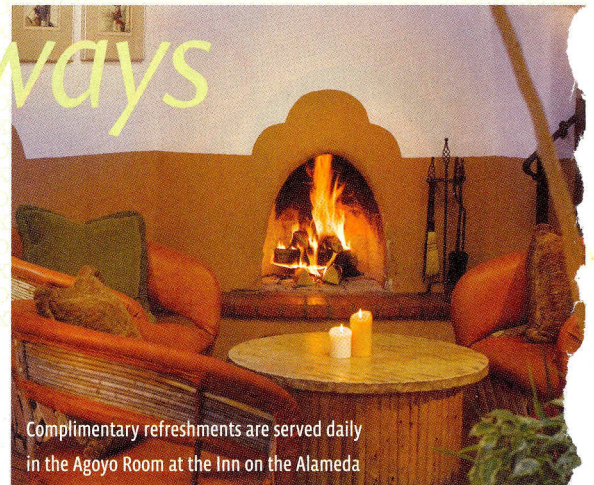
Valentine's Hideaways

Every couple has its own idea of what constitutes the perfect Valentine's getaway, and these days an uncertain economy also needs to be considered. Here are four cozy hideaways — one exotic and three closer to home — that offer truly romantic surroundings.

If “hot” and “steamy” describe

on a quiet ethereal quality after dark. On a recent night — with a full moon overhead and a light rain falling — my husband and I floated through rising steam, splashed in warm waterfalls, and emerged with baby-soft skin.

Tabacón is a five-star resort located in the northern part of



Complimentary refreshments are served daily in the Agoyo Room at the Inn on the Alameda

The natural rainforest setting of the Tabacón hot springs enhances their soothing effect



your perfect encounter, consider Tabacón Grand Spa Thermal Resort in Costa Rica. Here, guests soak in natural springs heated by the Arenal Volcano and enjoy privacy provided by lush tropical foliage and flowers.

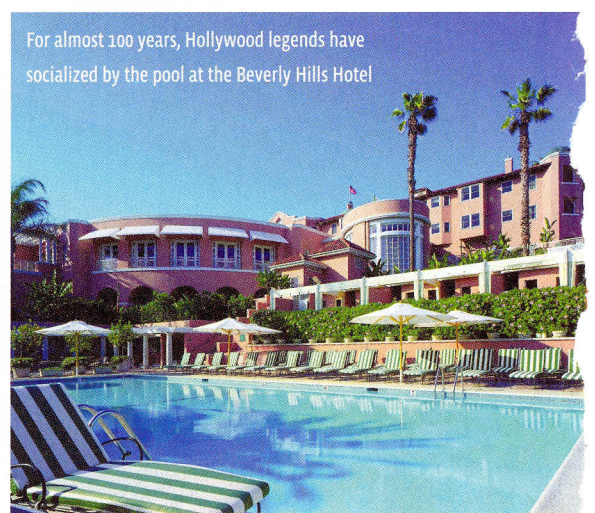
It's not surprising that this destination is a favorite of honeymooners, but I can personally attest that the romantic ambience is not reserved for young lovers. The pools — popular by day — take

Costa Rica near the town of La Fortuna. A member of The Leading Hotels of the World, the resort offers 114 rooms surrounded by gardens bursting with flowering ginger, cannas, bromeliads, native poinsettias, and myriad other colorful plants. Our deluxe quarters came with a huge bathroom and a balcony overlooking the rainforest. (www.tabacon.com)

Closer to home, the Inn on the Alameda is an intimate retreat that captures the essence of

sophisticated Santa Fe, New Mexico. Spanish tiles, handmade furniture, and Native American rugs contribute to the hotel's warm, romantic atmosphere. Deluxe rooms and suites offer traditional kiva fireplaces — perfect for cuddling on chilly winter nights. During the day, the city's excellent museums are popular destinations. The Inn is centrally located near Santa Fe's renowned art galleries, mercados, and restaurants — many specializing in Southwestern cuisine. Room rates include a breakfast buffet and afternoon wine and cheese reception. (www.innonthealameda.com)

Even closer to San Diego, The

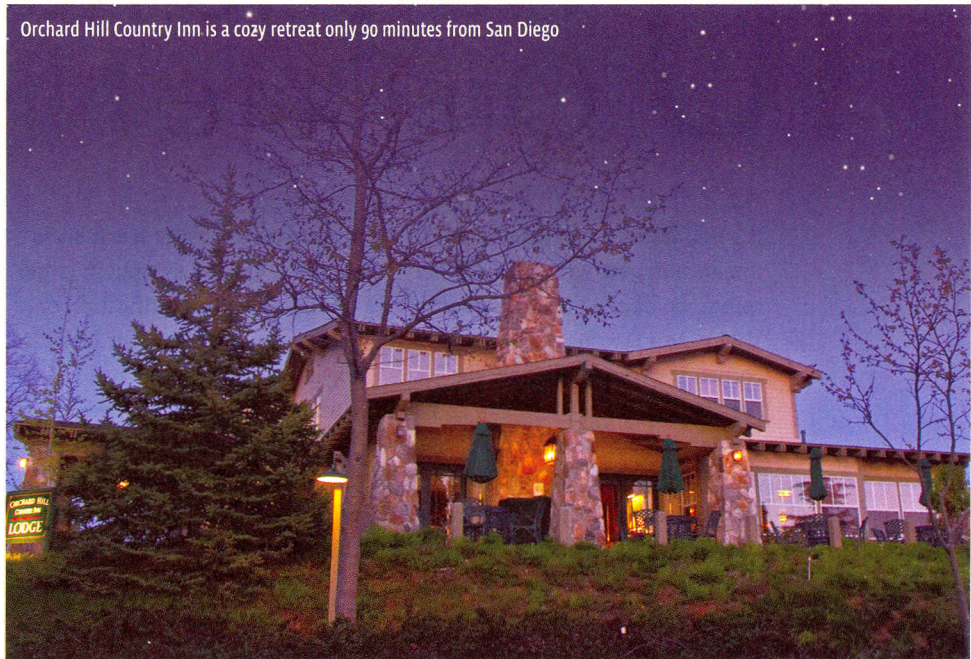


For almost 100 years, Hollywood legends have socialized by the pool at the Beverly Hills Hotel

Beverly Hills Hotel & Bungalows has been a romantic getaway for over 100 years. Hollywood legends Leslie Caron and Warren Beatty are just one pair that chose the cozy private bungalows for secret trysts. The “pink palace” was also popular with Marilyn Monroe and Yves Montand, who made love in bungalow number five while filming *Let’s Make Love* at Fox Studios. In addition, John Lennon and Yoko Ono hid out in bungalow number 11 for a solid romance-filled week; Elizabeth Taylor honeymooned in the bungalows with six of her eight husbands.

The hotel’s public areas are still reminiscent of 1940s Hollywood glamour. Located on Sunset Boulevard, steps from Rodeo Drive, The Beverly Hills Hotel remains the place to see and be seen and revel in over-the-top luxury.

If the hotel is your V-Day hideaway of choice, you’ll find 204 guestrooms and 21 one-of-a-kind bungalows sited on 12 acres of landscaped grounds. Rooms include English-style sofas, tufted stools at the foot of canopied beds, matelese comforters, and velvet throw pillows.



Orchard Hill Country Inn is a cozy retreat only 90 minutes from San Diego

The bungalows have separate entrances and wood-burning fireplaces, and some offer pianos, Jacuzzi tubs, and silk bathrobes. Bungalow five, the four-bedroom Presidential Bungalow, offers a private lap pool built in 1991 for frequent guest Walter Annenberg. Limousine service within Beverly Hills is complimentary. (www.thebeverlyhillshotel.com)

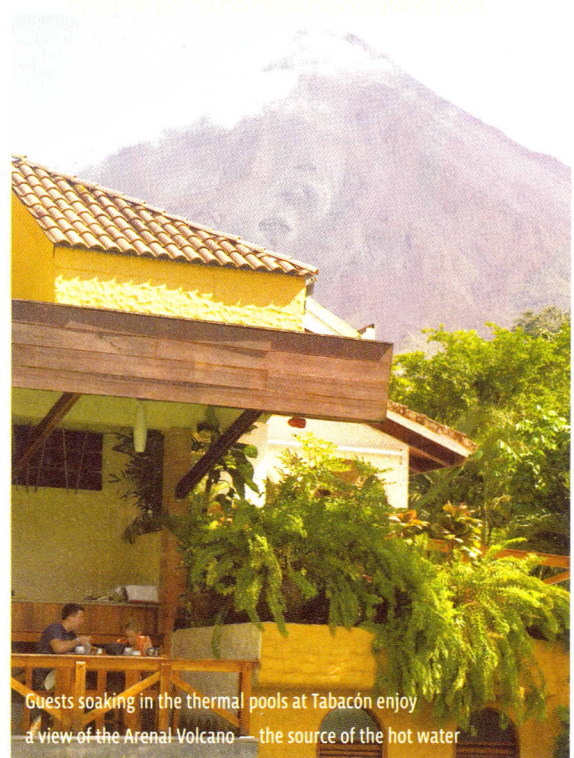
It isn’t as glamorous, but Julian’s Orchard Hill Country Inn is only 90 minutes from San Diego and rates are decidedly more affordable. The four-diamond Craftsmen-style bed-and-breakfast inn offers ten cozy lodge rooms and 12 cottage rooms with fireplaces. Here, décor is country chic and the “stars” are in the night sky.

Under a vaulted ceiling in the great room, pre-dinner hors d’oeuvres are served with wine, beer, and other beverages in front of a large stone fireplace. Orchard Hill will celebrate Valentine’s Day with a

five-course dinner, Champagne, truffles, and roses.

Visitors to historic Julian enjoy horse-drawn carriage rides, wine tasting at Menghini Winery, and — of course — eating apple pie. (www.orchardhill.com)

ELIZABETH HANSEN



Guests soaking in the thermal pools at Tabacón enjoy a view of the Arenal Volcano — the source of the hot water



Bungalow suites at the Beverly Hills Hotel are spacious “homes” with separate entrances, wood-burning fireplaces, and luxurious one-of-a-kind furnishings