

## **Time to Retreat Relax & Regroup At Area Wellness Centers**

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Omega at The Crossings  
Austin, Texas  
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This magnificent 200-acre educational center in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve west of Austin could be known some day as the ultimate educational retreat center. Like the Broken Spoke's music or the view from the Oasis, Omega at the Crossings has the potential to become an Austin icon. The newly created \$20 million center offers an every-so-satisfying blend of hill country and Lake Travis views, cascading Zen-like fountains and waterfalls, respect for the environment (evidenced in all of the architecture) and an appreciation for the open-minded.

Husband-wife team Ken and Joyce Beck are responsible for building the for-profit learning center. Having enjoyed the financial windfall of the rising price of Dell stock for several years as the company's director of sales operations, Ken was able to retire with more money than most people will see in their lifetimes. But this unique couple wanted to give back to their community.

"We encourage our guests not only to stretch their bodies, but their minds, souls and hearts," says Joyce. "We want to offer a more holistic and balanced perspective to live. For example, this morning I had a deep-tissue massage at our spa. The more I let go the more relaxed my body became. If I attended a class this afternoon, my body would already be more open to the information

I will hear.” She points out that many people leading healthy lifestyles – eating right, running, working out with personal trainers – may be neglecting the time they need to process their feelings and emotions. As a psychotherapist, Joyce has worked with the impact of emotions on the body for more than 25 years.

The program centers around their multi-day workshops on topics as diverse as Spanish lessons, restorative yoga, holiday gifts from the kitchen and fearless loving. For the music lover, there is a course Oct. 5 to 10 called “Drum song,” the art and spirit of drumming. For the golfer, there’s a workshop Nov. 21 to 23 titled “Integrating Golf and Yoga” led by Chuck Munson, a contemporary of Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite. On a recent Saturday morning, a workshop was in progress on discovering community among different spiritual traditions. Religious leaders from the world’s major religious traditions were present: Christianity, Judaism, Muslim and Buddhism. The purpose was to explore spiritual traditions outside of your own and to create a new respect for their differences. In another workshop down the hall, at least 50 participants were enthusiastically free-form dancing to rock music in a course called “Waves” taught by Gabrielle Roth and Jonathan Horan.

While everything at the Crossings has an understated elegance, from the Balinese furniture to the organic lavender hand cream, the spa and swimming pool area is literally over the top.

According to spa director Sophia Sarmiento, the Olympic-sized pool was designed with an infinity edge, which matches the horizon line and gives the sensation that it spills off the edge into another body of water. In fact, Sarmiento likes to describe their spa as an oasis of unique healing water therapies such as the dry sauna, Jacuzzi, cool dip, steam room and watsu pool. The word spa does indeed come from the Latin phrase *salus per aquam*, meaning “healing through water.” Their signature spa treatment is

the watsu, a floating massage conducted in warm mineral waters. The term watsu comes from combining the words water and shiatsu, so the treatment involves a shiatsu massage done in the water, designed to release tension and boost energy. Floating takes the guest out of gravity, making it easier to relax. (Watsu costs \$95/hour.) The spa also has treatments like Swedish massage and Indian Ayurvedic skin services.