

## **BRILLIANT**

Premier Issue

### **A Meeting of Mind, Body & Spirit**

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Growth, Balance, Sanctuary. These are the three major tenets of Omega at The Crossings, a new learning and retreat center in the Hill Country outside Austin. Perched above Lake Travis in the pristine Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, The Crossings is a progressive learning center that offers a broad range of workshops, professional training and retreats for the mind, body, and spirit.

On land blessed by a coalition of interfaith clergy, The Crossings welcomes with a calming energy, a stillness that signifies a time in retreat. The village-like architecture blends with both landscape and tree line, with man-made and natural structures working in harmony. The Sanctuary invites contemplation and meditation, aided by fountains, walkways and a sacred space. An infinity edge pool expands downward into Lake Travis. Miles of walking trails provide a journey into nature and a bird-watching haven. Sunrise watched through the Movement Room both orients and inspires. Romanesque fountains throughout the spa beckon relaxation. The sound of a conch shell signals that meals are served, and the dining hall's panoramic vista of the setting sun welcomes the evening.

The Crossings was founded and developed by Ken and Joyce Beck of Austin. The name represents how the Beck's have pursued their two careers – with Joyce in psychotherapy and Ken in business. “The Crossings” represents the nexus of these two careers and is a metaphor for many types of change: different people and different ideas crossing and coming together to create community.

The Beck's visited the original Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York – the nation's premier center for holistic education – and were inspired by all they learned from the its workshops and retreats. Upon realizing they shared a common goal, a partnership was formed. The knowledge and expertise of the Omega Institute would be brought to Austin by constructing an adjunct of the original institute, a western campus called Omega at The Crossings.

The Crossings Wellness Center and Spa is a state-of-the-art facility that welcomes and provides ultimate comfort in its ambience and treatments. The goal is to work off of Sebastian Kneipp's view of wellness, which includes five different disciplines: hydrotherapy, herbal therapy, healthy nutrition, exercise and a practice or discipline. The spa includes a broad range of bodywork and massage therapies, including Watsu massage, a relaxing womb-like experience in a specially designed pool that releases tension and blocked energy. Other unique therapies that nourish the body and soul include ayurvedic and aesthetic facial treatments, hand and feet therapies, consultations for acupuncture, iridology, and holistic health. Spa amenities include hot tubs, cold dips, pool, steam showers and saunas.

Omega at the Crossings reaches three distinct demographic groups: the first being the "Seeker" market, which is the most common. "Seekers" are people who reach a point in their professional and personal lives where they seek more balance in life, hoping to understand more about themselves, their identity and their purpose. The second demographic group targeted is professionals who attend continuing education classes to grow in their particular field of expertise, and the third is the business community, where companies can participate in a strategic planning retreat.

Dining at The Crossings is a time to nourish both body and soul with whole food for a nutritious dining experience. All food

preparations are from scratch cooking thereby avoiding all additives and excessive sodium, with an emphasis on fresh and organic ingredients. The dining management seeks to provide guests with meals prepared from food in its purest form combined with other items to create an intriguing overlap of flavor and texture. The goal is to make healthy food not only flavorful but also attractive.

The interiors and the furnishings were developed by Studio2 Designs as “Tex-Zen:” clean, simple lines, with a minimalist look, and an emphasis on materials native to Texas. As Ken Beck describes, “the overall design recognizes that we are in Texas. The choices and size of materials, and how they are structured should fit into the Texas landscape, but also be Zen-like in simple, clean, easy lines. When people come, they should not be enamored and surprised by the buildings, but rather we want them to be enamored and surprised by the learning experience.”

The impressive lineup of both five-day and weekend workshops includes national talent, such as Jon Kabat-Zinn, who will lead a workshop in meditation – specifically Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR); Iyanla Vanzant, author of many books on hope and healing and one of Oprah Winfrey’s favorites, who will lead a healing retreat for professionals; Eckhart Tolle, the author of *The Power of Now*; and, Neale Donald Walsch, the author of *Conversations with God*. Additionally, The Crossings Business Institute will include workshops geared toward executives and professionals who seek to improve business practices and communication. The Business Institute also will feature a business conference component where executives can learn the overall economic value in body-mind therapies, such a MBSR for increased morale and productivity, while conducting strategic planning offsite.

With such a broad array of holistic healing and learning options available at Omega at The Crossings, it would be difficult not to come away with some level of positive personal transformation. As Joyce Beck says, “The goal of personal transformation may take many different paths; some people come for healing, some come for learning, others want to explore something brand new, something they haven’t learned before.”