

TEXAS

DESTINATION SERENITY

By Helen Bryant Special to the Star Telegram

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At The Crossings, the physical and metaphysical meet

Austin – Just moments from the menacing snarl of north Austin traffic, there's a womb of serenity called The Crossings.

It opened last fall, and it's a lot of things; an escape in the hills for hiking or relaxing; a spa; a meditation center; a business conference center.

A car dealership went there for a retreat, to figure out how to sell more cars. A California devotee of Deepak Chopra led a seminar on exploring the dark side of one's personality. In a spa treatment room, a woman got an herbal massage specifically designed to ease her into menopause.

And about a hundred yards into the woods, in a sanctuary emblazoned with symbols of various world religions, a visitor just sat, enjoying the solitude.

"The crossing of all these purposes is exactly the idea," says co-owner Joyce Beck. "I love it when all these people who've come for these various reasons meet in the dining hall and get into discussions," she says.

Beck launched The Crossings with her husband, Ken, after the native Minnesotans camped on the wooded site northwest of Austin and fell in love with it.

“It was the crossing of my career (as a psychologist) with Ken’s (businessman),” she says.

Affiliated with the Omega holistic health philosophy, The Crossings offers seminars on spirituality and self-examination. But if all the warm fuzziness and introspection bother you, you can just hang out and swim, hike, get a facial or take a cooking or songwriting class.

“We want people to enjoy the serenity,” says Beck.

Stay at The Crossings for a week, a weekend or just a day. The lodge has rooms comparable to those of an upscale hotel starting at \$285 per person, double occupancy, for a weekend, or a comfy bunkhouse single (communal bathroom) starting at \$210 for a weekend. The rate includes all meals and any regular classes.

If you’d just like to show up for the day and use the pool, hot tub, sauna or steam room the rate is \$20. Spa treatments cost \$45 to \$225.

More info: (877) 944-3003 or www.omegacrossings.com.