

Hill Country News

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The Crossings

Promoting Growth, Balance, and Sanctuary

By Cassie Holman

Nestled in the heart of the Hill Country, out of earshot of nearby Austin, The Crossings is a refuge for those looking to get away.

Located on FM 2769 near the intersection at Bullick Hollow and Volente Road, The Crossings is located on 210 acres of land adjacent to Balcones Canyonlands and overlooking the Cypress Creek branch of Lake Travis.

It's not just a spa. It's not just a retreat center. It is a holistic learning center that focuses on three central concepts – growth, balance, and sanctuary.

For Ken and Joyce Beck, it is a dream come true.

The idea of The Crossings came in 1995. Ken had spent the previous 12 years working in the computer industry at Dell. Joyce had spent her life as a psychotherapist. The two have been married for 37 years.

“We were trying to think of some way to take two parallel career paths and blend them to a crossing point where we could do something together,” Ken said. “So that’s where the name came from.” They went to work for the next three years developing a state-of-the-art campus, which opened in September 2003.

Of the 210 acres of land, only 35 are developed. The remaining land is wildlife preserve. The campus is made up of 15 buildings, including four teaching venues, seven lodges, a spa and a restaurant. The land also features an extensive line of nature trails.

The Classes***

One of the aspects that makes The Crossings unique, according to Ken, is the variety of classes it provides throughout the year. The classes are offered both as weekend or week-long seminars and range from topics in music, art, meditation, and yoga.

“When we talk about The Crossings, we talk about balance, growth and sanctuary,” Ken said. “We teach balance in life so that we’re better human beings, better employees, better spouses, etc. The growth is the opportunity to really stretch ourselves through the classes we teach here. The sanctuary is to do that all in a very safe setting.”

Through a partnership with the Omega Institute based in Rhinebeck, N.Y., the nation’s largest provider of holistic education, The Crossings is able to bring in experts from across the nation to teach the classes.

“They’re the people you see on Oprah, the people who are writing the most current books,” Ken said. They’re all teaching around a paradigm of mind, body, heart and soul. When we talk about a holistic learning center, we’re talking about balance across all of those.”

Though the classes are based on spirituality, they are not based on any one denomination or religion.

“We offer events out here that are integrative by nature, so that people of all cultures and all philosophies and theologies can be here to meet,” Saxz Stevens, Event Services Manager, said.

The Spa***

At The Crossings’ Wellness Center, a variety of treatments are offered including Swedish massage, herbal body wraps and hand and feet treatments. In addition, the center has an educational component.

“We want to educate people as to why massage is good for you and explain why taking care of your body is very important,” Ken said.

Throughout the Wellness Center, visitors will find plenty of areas in which to wait before a treatment or relax after a treatment. Clients have access to steam rooms, a hot tub, an Olympic-length swimming pool that overlooks Lake Travis, and a sauna.

One unique therapy The Crossings offers is Watsu, a form of water therapy. The client enters the Watsu pool, which is four feet deep and 10 feet in diameter, with a therapist. The water is heated to body temperature, 96 degrees. In the water, the client relaxes and allows the therapist to work.

“The idea is the client totally relaxes and trusts that they are not going to go underwater,” Ken said. “The therapist is trained to move them through the water and stretch and pull and use pressure points. It’s a beautiful form of therapy.”

A 50-minute Watus treatment is \$95.

The Lodges***

Those who want to really get away from the stress of their lives may stay in one of the on-site cabins. The cabins feature either one or two queen-sized beds. Visitors may also stay in a bunk house, which provides individual rooms and a shared bathroom. The rooms feature beds, desks, private decks, and phones. One thing you won’t find, though, is a television.

“We want people to be in retreat; we want them to get away from the hustle and bustle of the normal world, to come and look inside, be reflective and talk,” Ken said.

Each of the rooms has an east-facing view from the deck.

“The idea is to celebrate the rising sun individually in the rooms and celebrate the setting sun collectively on the deck at either the dining hall or the spa,” he said.

Rates for the rooms are \$105 for a room in the bunk house, \$160 for a shared double room and \$225 for a private single. All rates include three meals a day.

The Restaurant***

“We serve three meals a day, seven days a week,” Ken said. The dining hall can seat up to 185 people and serves a variety of healthy food, buffet style.

It isn’t all organic and it isn’t all vegetarian (they serve chicken and fish), but it is all healthy.

“We don’t do any deep frying,” Ken said. What is remarkable about the dining area is the view. On a large deck with tables and seating just outside the dining area and café, visitors can enjoy a picturesque view of the sun setting over Lake Travis.

“This is what sold us on the place,” Ken said, while looking out at the view. We came up here and looked down at the valley and said this is right. Joyce and I always imagined that we’d be able to sit out here with a glass of wine and watch the sunset.”

Next to the dining hall is a bookstore which features books and CDs by faculty members who have taught at The Crossings.

For those who don’t want a large meal appetizers can be found in the café next to the dining hall. The café also serves beer and wine in the evening.

The Crossings also features a library and a theater.

Conference halls, which hold up to 300 people, are also available for groups to use. The Village of Volente recently used the space for its April candidate forum.

All the buildings at The Crossings are built with a “Tex Zen” theme,” Ken said. “Everything is true to Texas, the whole campus looks like it belongs here, and it is Zen-like in simplicity and colors and feelings,” Ken said. “That’s what drove the color selection and the materials we used.”

For more information on The Crossings, visit the website at www.thecrossingsaustin.com or call 258.7243.