

THE AUBERGE DU SOLEIL STORY

RUTHERFORD, CALIF. – What began as a fine California-French restaurant created by Claude Rouas, a leading San Francisco restaurateur, has evolved into one of America’s most sought-after small luxury hotels and a perennial recipient of the hospitality industry’s highest honors. Auberge du Soleil opened as Napa Valley’s first fine-dining venue in 1981, the vision of French-born Rouas, who sought to recreate the sun-drenched ambiance of Provence in the California Wine Country.

Perched on the slope of Rutherford Hill overlooking Napa Valley, the Auberge quickly gained recognition as one of the leading restaurants in Northern California, not only for its superb cuisine, but also its spectacular views of the valley below. In 1985, responding to guest demand, Rouas and business partner Robert Harmon opened the inn, a collection of sun- and earth-toned *maisons* housing 50 rooms and suites, each with French doors opening onto private terraces and sweeping views of olive groves and the vine-studded valley. As with the restaurant, the *maisons* were the work of influential designer Michael Taylor, who infused his “California Style” of overscaled furniture, dramatic fabrics and sculptural accessories with the essence of Provence. The suites enchanted guests with their elegantly rustic furnishings, handmade tile floors, abstract paintings and French doors leading to private terraces and sweeping views of the valley below.

“Auberge du Soleil brought a new style of informal elegance, luxury and service to the world of hospitality 25 years ago,” said George Goeggel, Managing Partner. “For many, it embodies the perfect retreat, and we’ve been pleased to see how many guests have returned again and again throughout the years. Few hotels age gracefully. At 25, the Auberge is better than ever.”

The inn opened to immediate acclaim. Critics called it “Casa Vogue;” “the kind of hotel so often found in Europe – secluded, discreet and elegant – and with wonderful food;” and “a masterpiece of design.” Since then, Auberge du Soleil has repeatedly received some of the highest accolades from the hospitality industry, discriminating guests and the media. In 1988, the Auberge joined Relais & Châteaux, the most prestigious collection of small luxury hotels and restaurants in the world.

Auberge Spa, a retreat modeled after a centuries-old monastery, opened in 2001 and continues to be one of the most acclaimed spas in the industry. With its fountains, private gardens and outdoor soaking pools, the spa provides a physical and emotional barrier from the outside world, offering a setting for peaceful rejuvenation.

In 2007, a dramatic multi-year renovation of all guest rooms, restaurants, pool and outdoor living spaces was completed under the direction of San Francisco designer Suzanne Tucker, Michael Taylor's protégée, who was involved in the design of the inn's 1985 interiors. She took her inspiration from Taylor's original files, including a vintage Pierre Frey fabric that he had admired, and commissioned the company's Paris subsidiary to custom-dye and weave it exclusively for the Auberge. Its motif and persimmon color are now signature elements seen throughout the resort. The result is a bright, warm look that's updated, yet bold in Taylor's fashion and reminiscent of a secluded Côte d'Azur retreat.

The final piece of the renovation was the reinvention of the outdoor pool space as a sexy, laid-back outdoor living room. Renamed *La Plage*, it's a sun-drenched spot where guests can spend lazy hours lounging poolside on oversized chaises or underneath gauze-draped canopies on day beds for two.

The Auberge's French-accented California style and soft-spoken luxury echo the character of Napa Valley, a place to savor the bounty of fine food and wine and immerse oneself in an exquisite natural setting. Under the direction of Executive Chef Robert Curry, the Restaurant at Auberge du Soleil has earned international recognition, including back-to-back Michelin stars. Tables on the famous terrace are some of the most popular in the Valley, due to the panoramic views of the olive groves, vineyards and sunsets. In the spring of 2010, a rejuvenation of the restaurant's outdoor dining deck was completed, giving the restaurant's many fans a new reason to return and savor the perfect combination of fine cuisine and unparalleled scenery.

Since the inn's opening, guests have been drawn to the Auberge for its privacy, tranquility and unmistakable romance. Romance and all that it entails -- escape, total privacy, and the intimacy of having a beautiful spot to share -- is an important part of the allure of Auberge du Soleil. Guests agree that a stay at the Auberge is a complete experience, with equally superb components that complement one another: understated service, fine cuisine and atmosphere.

About Auberge Resorts

Auberge Resorts is a collection of exceptional hotels, resorts and private clubs, each with a unique personality that assures a memorable guest experience. Among the distinctive properties are Auberge du Soleil, Napa Valley; Esperanza, Cabo San Lucas; Calistoga Ranch, Napa Valley; The Inn at Palmetto Bluff, South Carolina; Encantado, Santa Fe; Rancho Valencia Resort and Spa, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif, with several others currently in development. While Auberge Resorts nurtures the individuality of each establishment, all are characterized by a set of communal elements: intimate, understated elegance; captivating locations that inspire exceptional cuisine and spa experiences; and gracious yet unobtrusive service. For more information about Auberge Resorts, please visit www.aubergeresorts.com.

Auberge du Soleil is also a member of **Relais & Châteaux**, the prestigious global hospitality association of intimate, elegant and independently owned hotels and acclaimed restaurants. Founded in 1954 in France, the association is comprised of 480 luxurious establishments in 56 countries.

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