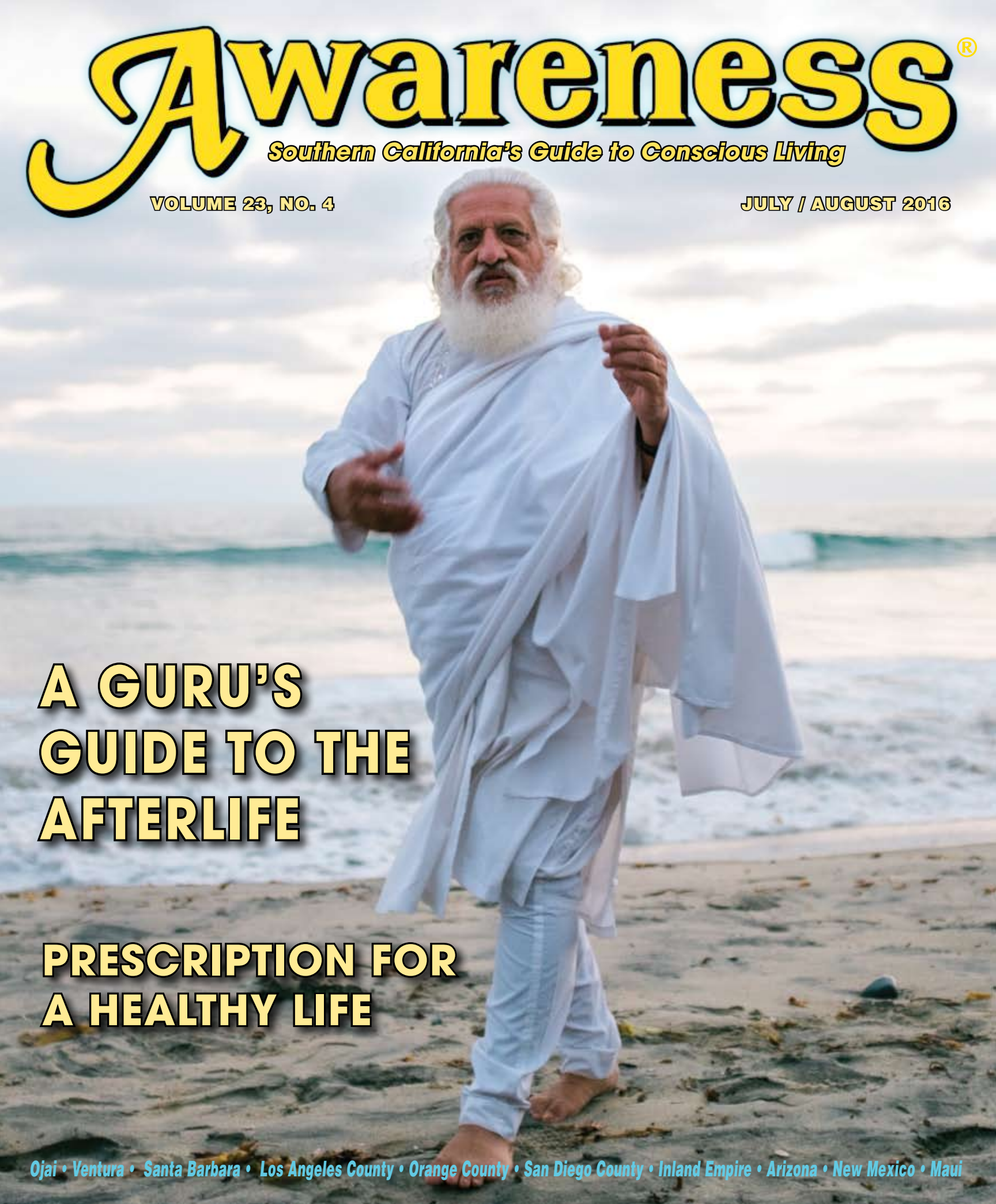


# Awareness<sup>®</sup>

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**A GURU'S  
GUIDE TO THE  
AFTERLIFE**

**PRESCRIPTION FOR  
A HEALTHY LIFE**



# Award-Winning Spa Destinations

By Ann Nelson

I know very few people who are not affected by the craziness going on in the world right now. It's essential that we give ourselves a break and go to a quiet tranquil place to recharge and renew. My friend DJ and I were yearning to get away and after careful research, we knew just where to go.

Our first destination was thirty minutes from San Diego, two hours from Los Angeles and six miles from the ocean. We drove along winding country roads, through groves of towering eucalyptus trees, hidden houses and horse farms to the historic Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. The inn, built in 1922 and located in the center of the village, is situated on 21 pristine acres. The grounds are soothing and filled with nature. Gentle paths wind through gardens, croquet lawns and courtyards with cozy lounging areas surrounding outdoor fireplaces. Plants harvested from the lush organic garden are essential ingredients for the restaurant and the spa.

The Spa at the Inn offers superb therapy work. The Inner Strength Massage incorporates a blend of essential oils

to relax, calm and emotionally strengthen the mind and spirit. The Deep Discovery Massage focuses on penetrating work to reduce muscle tension and inflammation. Spa Director Kate Santarsieri feels strongly that balance and energy work are an important ingredient that bring profound purpose to a guest's experience. Kate says her "daily mantra" is for spa guests to disconnect from their wired lives and "reconnect with themselves". The private walled courtyard with an oversized copper bathing tub provides the perfect environment for meditation and reconnecting with breath. Lisa Gornall, an immensely gifted intuitive energy coach visits the spa for private sessions.

Morada's, the signature restaurant, spills out onto the oversized porch overlooking the elegant landscape. Menu choices are constantly evolving, inspired by the fresh local produce.

The rural elegance of the inn and the town itself offer a little slice of serenity along with the feeling of nostalgia that exemplifies the ambiance of "Old California". Spending time at



Photo courtesy of Rancho La Puerta.

this countryside retreat is actually more affordable than many places at the nearby beach. The quaint historic village and sixty miles of hiking trails are just outside the front door. Many of the luxurious guest rooms and cottages feature outdoor lounging areas and fireplaces. The inn has a long history of prestigious awards, including 2014 Conde Nast "Top 5 of the 25 Best Hotels in Southern California" and 2015 USA Today "Top Ten Best Boutique Hotels in Southern California".

Rancho La Puerta, a little over an hour's drive from San Diego and around three hours from Los Angeles, is another magical and transformative destination. The spa, voted "Top 10 Best Destination Spas" in 2015 by Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards Reader's Polls, has been in operation since 1940 and is situated on 3,000 acres at the base of Mount Kuchumaa.

The heart and soul of Rancho La Puerta is based on the life principles of its co-founder, Deborah Szekely. "It's easy to play so many roles that you're just not there. You won't find yourself unless you look and listen. The goal is to look at yourself and find time for yourself." The key, Deborah says, is to create a balance in life.

There are endless ways to fill your days here. Dozens of activities and fitness classes include boxing, stretching, yoga, meditation, hiking, dancing and jewelry making. A full menu

of spa treatments are available at therapy centers that dot the landscape. There are 11 gyms, four outdoor pools, a running track, a Labyrinth, a reflexology path and tennis courts. Evening programs and lectures are featured each week and discussion topics range from "A New Vision for Growing Wise" to "Taking Charge of Your Health and Happiness". Many of the keynote speakers are world-renowned artists, doctors, astronomers and philosophers.

Activities, meals, lodging and classes are included in the price. Six different styles of casitas all come with lovely patios and gardens. Healthy scrumptious meals are prepared with ingredients from the six-acre organic garden and served in the beautiful Spanish Colonial dining room. Executive Chef Denise Roa dazzles guests with creations like Homemade Pasta with Porcini Mushrooms. Cooking classes are offered by visiting chefs such as Joe Yonan, the two-time James Beard Award-winning Food and Dining editor of The Washington Post. On Saturday round-trip transportation to and from the San Diego airport is provided.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

**The Inn & Spa at Rancho Santa Fe:** (858) 756-1131 or [www.theinnatrsf.com](http://www.theinnatrsf.com)

**Rancho La Puerta:** (858) 764-5500 or contact: [www.rancholapuerta.com](http://www.rancholapuerta.com)

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