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## Travel log

By Fran Endicott Miller



Sit poolside surrounded by mountain views.  
Photos provided

in an open-air pergola, lushly furnished with colorful Thai textiles. Outside of each room is a private dining table, poised toward the vineyard views, and at which afternoon tea and a leisurely three course breakfast are graciously served. Afternoon tea includes a choice of hot or cold teas, and both sweet and savory items, including fresh fruit from local K&J Orchards. Breakfast, served between 9 to 10:30 a.m., includes choice of coffee or tea, a basket of baked goods, more fresh fruit, and a main course choice of both American and Thai offerings. Each service is unrushed and unhurried. And anyone requiring an anytime snack can help themselves to chips and other kid-friendly goodies from the honor bar, where a Nespresso coffee maker stands ready to provide a caffeine kick.

Furthering the 'outdoor living' theme is the pool, deck, and hot tub, featuring unobstructed vineyard and mountain views. Bistro tables, chairs, and swings are surrounded by expansive, vineyard-adjacent, organic gardens from which Souksamlane sources ingredients for both Bann and OSHA Thai. The property brims with art and artifacts from Souksamlane's personal collection, such as pottery vessels, flowing fountains, and elephant carvings that will delight little ones. (Elephants are the national symbol of Thailand, admired for their strength, endurance, and intelligence.)

For those who continue to have travel trepidation, Bann is a perfect getaway - seating areas are naturally distanced, and with just a handful of guests present at any given time, no one will be angling for pool seating. Bann may not be a substitute for a trip to Thailand, but it certainly feels like another world, one that well suits the Napa Valley.



Bann at Oak Knoll open-air pergola Photos provided

It's an unusual combination, but somehow, it works - a Thai-themed boutique hotel, set smack in the middle of Napa Valley vineyards, surrounded by grapes and with Vaca Mountain views. Owned and operated by famed Thai chef Lalita Souksamlane of popular San Francisco restaurant OSHA Thai, Bann at Oak Knoll is an oasis of color and is an ideal spot for either a romantic getaway or a family escape.

The intimate, five room inn is a serene reflection of its country of inspiration, where life is lived outdoors. Here as well, emphasis is placed on fresh air and sunshine, despite the ornate and inviting nature of each of the immense quarters, each of which the décor is based upon a different region of Thailand. Featuring rich textiles, low platform beds, and orchids - so many orchids - the rooms, and especially the bathrooms, are alluring. The deep, free-standing soaking tubs, beside which are placed bath salts and a fizzy ball, are especially irresistible, as are the plush and incredibly soft robes. A bottle of Chanel perfume adds an indulgent touch as does the plumeria-scented body lotion.

If it sounds romantic, it is. But Bann also welcomes children, as evidenced by the two large floaties drifting in the pool - a unicorn and a duck. One of the rooms is especially geared toward families with two king size beds and two day beds.

Despite the ornate room décor, Bann is most about what's outside those beautiful rooms. Guests are greeted



Spacious bedrooms offer a serene space to relax. Photos provided

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