

Unique Places to Stay:

Golfing is only the beginning at the Saddle Creek Resort

Our road-trip was quite uneventful from Los Angeles, but as we arrived at Saddle Creek Resort, our journey really got started. The tranquility of this place is reminiscent of the green, clean aired, New Zealand, or the Austrian Alps. Saddle Creek is only six hours away from Los Angeles, but it might as well be on a different planet. Life is nice and slow in Copperopolis, at the feet of the Sierras.

We started with the couple's aromatherapy massage to help us change gears into a more slowed-down and relaxing pace after a frantic workweek. Afterward, a short drive through the historic Gold Country took us to Murphy, our wine tasting destination. We began our sampling at Twisted Oak tasting room. Crowded rooms of wine aficionados waited to sample the latest vintage of the Tempranillo or the gold medal award-winning Old Vine Calaveras County Zinfandel. It seems like every winery has something uniquely theirs, such as the Orange Muscat at Stevenot Winery.

Upon our return to the resort, we were greeted by Dan Murphy, our Maitre d', who proved to be quite the Renaissance Man. Aside from being the resort restaurant's Maitre d', Dan is an architect by trade, and he also served as our fly fishing guide. The ambiance at the restaurant was one of casual elegance. The staff were extremely attentive and more than eager to accommodate our every request.



forgotten what clean air smells like. I saw a fox, a bear, and we even caught a fish! I long looked for my Shangri-La and in Saddle Creek I found it. **Szilvia Gogh, USA**



We started golfing early in the morning through the 18-hole, pro-rated, course. The course was challenging, yet every hole was full of aesthetically pleasing and dramatic views of the Sierras. Golfing at the Saddle Creek Resort was a Zen-like experience because of the natural beauty, and the focus and concentration necessary to place the ball in the hole. Golfing capped-off the perfect day!

My favorite activity was fly fishing on the last day of our excursion. We met Dan Murphy at Tuolumne, Cherry Creek and started our twenty-minute hike to find a suitable spot for our introductory fishing lesson. We learned fly fishing basics like tying knots, selecting proper bait for the season (fly vs. grasshopper). He tried to pass on to us as much as he could in half a day, and we soaked up his every word. Standing between rocks in the cool, slightly moving river, feeling my boots filling up with water while the sun was stroking my back, while a slight breeze played with my hair, felt like heaven on earth. I heard birds singing, the water crashing the rocks, and all of mother-nature's melodic sounds. I smelled nature as well; the water, and the woods. Living in the city, I had

Shri Swaminarayan Mandir

You don't have to travel all the way to the Indian subcontinent to experience the haven of tranquillity and exotic architecture of a Hindu Mandir. The largest Hindu stone Mandir in the Western hemisphere is the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir and you'll find it in Neasden in North London. With its soaring pinnacles and white marble pillars on the exterior and exquisite carving inside, it's a delight to behold. The first traditional Hindu Mandir in Europe, some 2,820 tonnes of Bulgarian limestone and 2,000 tonnes of Italian Carrara marble were shipped to India, carved by over 1,500 craftsmen and then re-shipped to London for its creation. One of London's more unique and lesser known attractions, the complex also features an informative exhibition on the history and current practice of Hinduism. Admission to the temple is free but there is a small charge for the exhibition. Visit www.mandir.org for more information.

