

By Bonnie Carroll

## setting the scene

### AZUR by Le Bernardin LA QUINTA RESORT & SPA

Winter/Spring is a tricky time to plan a *getaway* weekend—the weather swings one way then another. But at *La Quinta Resort & Spa*, in La Quinta, California, it doesn't matter if it rains or shines because there's always something to do, including a full schedule of classes, tours, and one of the finest restaurants in the desert to savor.

The charming entrance to this 80-year old historic resort is deceiving. At first glance—a cluster of Spanish buildings, surrounded by flowers. Once on the property, however, you discover a tiny town filled with golf, tennis, swimming, spa treatments, shopping and dining. Golf at *La Quinta* is considered some of the best in the world, plus plenty of planned activities for children.

The outstanding restaurant *AZUR* by *Le Bernardin* is my favorite with a new menu of award-winning recipes presented by *Chef de Cuisine Eric Wadlund*, as well some *James Beard* inspired favorites. A word to describe the style of Eric's menu is *perfection*. I adore the dining venue and old world ambiance patrons enjoy when greeted by *Matre'd Karl Vidlak* and *Christina*, who help make visits memorable.

I recommend pan roasted *Sanoma foie gras* and the *lobster soup* is so outstanding—it is my all time favorite. Entrees—every one—are magnificent and desserts are beyond imagination, let alone flavor expectation. *Chef Wadlund* offers the freshest seafood in his tantalizing fish entrees and appetizers. His lobster and braised beef entrees are renowned.



Chef Eric Wadlund

*The La Quinta Spa* is a sanctuary of pleasure, with so many divine treatments...that it's difficult to decide which to choose. The spa has a private pool area for a light lunch between treatments. The fitness center is a healthy adventure on the latest exercise equipment, with a friendly staff to assist. There's a fabulous gift shop and a *Yamaguchi Salon* to get your



hair and nails in "Zen" shape, if the need arises. The Cafe overlooking the tennis courts is a pleasant place to jump start your day or relax in late afternoon sipping a smoothie. Tennis at *La Quinta* is historic, attracting star athletes, celebrities and dignitaries throughout the years. Buildings have private pools for swimming and sun bathing, and a large family pool with private cabanas and lots of water activities.

At *La Quinta* you can go at your own pace and this resort is designed for romantic visits, practical vacations loaded with "goodie" packages for families and, enough terrific sports activities to ensure that you burn calories in between savoring scrumptious food. For reservations visit: [www.laquintaresort.com](http://www.laquintaresort.com).

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