

# La Bellasera Hotel & Suites

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Thursday, February 12, 2009



La Bellasera Hotel & Suites A recent addition to Paso Robles' lineup of B&Bs and tartered-up motels, this Mediterranean-inspired hotel distinguishes itself with genuinely friendly service, oversize rooms and small touches that bump the luxury up a notch. Aimed squarely at wine country visitors - local vintners host complimentary weekend tastings - it also serves business travelers with conference facilities and loads of technology. Crown molding, ubiquitous natural stone and other Tuscan-style motifs are restrained, and the atmosphere is more pied-a-terre than hotel.

## Comfort Zone

Thirteen room and suite layouts offer various combinations of spas, fireplaces, kitchens, patios and balconies, all hewing to the toned-down Mediterranean theme, but each a little different. The smallest is 430 square feet. My king fireplace suite's bedroom was spare and serene. The bed was simply clad in fine-spun white linens covering a pillow-top mattress and hypoallergenic down pillows; two night tables and a bureau holding a plasma TV were its only company. A floor lamp and wall lights on both sides of the bed could be supplemented by powerful recessed lights over the bed if necessary for reading.

## Bath and beyond

The capacious stone-tiled shower had an 8-inch massaging rain head and two built-in shelves. A sleek black vanity held orange-scented, private-label toiletries, including mouthwash, earplugs, eye makeup remover and vanity, shaving and sewing kits - even a toothbrush. Add a magnifying mirror and votive candle, and there's not room for much else, but two deep drawers help. The bottom shelf held a mountain of thick towels and a digital scale; the robes were soft and fluffy.

## Grounds for approval

A parking lot takes up most of the site, tucked between the freeway and a shopping center. A landscaped rear pathway leads to the hotel restaurant patio, spa, exercise room and a pretty pool-

whirlpool-fireside cabana complex. The restaurant-wine bar, Enoteca, offers eclectic breakfast, lunch and dinner menus created from local produce and seafood.

## **Geared up**

There's no excuse for being unconnected here; in addition to free Wi-Fi, broadband and dial-up service, the wall-mounted, 42-inch high-def plasma TV in my living room offered high-speed Internet, a Microsoft Office suite clone, a remote keyboard and a USB port for flash drives. My bedroom had its own 32-inch HDTV and a clock radio with an iPod-MP3 dock. Each unit has a safe and two phones with data ports and voice mail. My living room had a gas fireplace in a stone surround; the fully equipped kitchen had a two-burner flat range top, dishwasher, microwave, toaster, coffeemaker and electronic wine chiller. I appreciated the full-size refrigerator, because mini-bars are the don't-touch-or-we'll-charge-you-\$4-for-a-bottle-of-water variety.

## **In the vicinity**

Downtown Paso Robles is nearly 3 miles away; the main attraction is a warren of country roads with dozens of wineries just minutes away. A nice touch: The key-card sleeve has a fold-out map of wineries and other local attractions. San Luis Obispo is a half hour away and Hearst Castle about a 40-minute drive.

## **Good to know**

Ground-floor suites toward the back of the hotel have private garden patios, which are more appealing than upper-floor views over the freeway or shopping center. On higher floors, try for a room near the back for views of the oak-studded hills to the west.

## **Highs and lows**

The staff, seamlessly melding informal congeniality with VIP treatment, manages to outshine even the luxurious comforts. I never quite shook the strange feeling that I was going to the mall each time I drove into the hotel, but once there, it felt like home.

**Vitals:** 206 Alexa Court, Paso Robles. (805) 238-2834, [www.labellasera.com](http://www.labellasera.com). 60 rooms and suites (seven wheelchair accessible). \$229-\$299 weekdays, \$259-\$329 Fri. and Sat.; suites \$239-\$369 weekdays, \$269-\$399 Fri. and Sat. Rates sometimes dip below \$200 for the least expensive rooms midweek and off-season; check Web site.

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This article appeared on page **F - 34** of the San Francisco Chronicle