



Guest Editor Paul J., Dallas TX: I recently spent the weekend with my son at one of the ritziest hotels in Los Angeles. Not on a busy street or prime commercial area of Beverly Hills or Santa Monica, the hotel is easy to miss. So hidden, my son almost drove by Stone Canyon, the small, winding road from Sunset Blvd.

The Hotel Bel-Air is in one of the upscale residential neighborhoods in the country. The hotel's swimming pool, with its oval shape and surrounding oval-shaped fence, is a tribute to the former oval-shaped horse corral, which once occupied the same space. The five-star hotel has been a favorite of prominent business and entertainment people for 70 years, located just north of Sunset Boulevard in the scenic Brentwood area of Los Angeles. South of Sunset starts the campus of UCLA, Beverly Hills is just to the east and the beaches of Santa Monica are ten miles to the west.

When arriving, we were greeted by friendly and helpful employees, and the attentive service continued from check-in and throughout our stay. We were impressed by the surrounding gardens, with many varieties of trees, including all varieties of palm, citrus, ficus and ferns.

The brick path to our suite is surrounded by blossoming flowers of all kinds and a lovely swan lake. Visitors can stroll across a bridge and watch the stately birds glide below. Additional features include the large swimming pool and full spa.

Our two-room suite was luxurious and comfortable, and included private garden with a Jacuzzi. There were two giant TV screens with beautiful picture quality. The phones, with computer screens on them, also controlled the suite's air conditioning and lighting.

Before dinner, we stopped by the hotel's comfortable bar for a casual drink, and enjoyed piano music that added to the pleasant atmosphere. We had dinner at a fantastic restaurant owned by one of the world's most famous food experts, Wolfgang Puck.

While we sipped champagne, we dined on Wolfe Ranch quail, with a side of al dente broccoli spears. Between courses, staff members surprised us with samplings of several exotic dishes.

The friendly atmosphere made us feel more like visiting family members than customers.

After dinner and a moonlight stroll around the hotel's magnificent grounds, we had a comfortable night's sleep. The next morning, after a final dip in our private spa, we had room service breakfast in our suite. We left the Hotel Bel-Air with pleasant memories of wonderful experiences of excellent service, personal comfort and the ultimate in luxury.

Hotel Bel-Air, 701 Stone Canyon Rd, Los Angeles CA 90077. Room rates start at about \$600 per night.