

Something Old, Something New

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Alisal Ranch and Resort

By Marilyn Hackett

Santa Clarita Valley has a proud place in Western heritage. Thousands of trees, golfing, boating on nearby lakes, hiking trails and horses make this a fine place to call home. So, why go anywhere? Well, we all need a break from city life, fixing dinners and taking kids to soccer or dance classes. It can be demanding. What if I told you that in a land not so far away there was a place of fun AND relaxation? Dinner will be set for you at the same table every night. You can have a massage while your children commune with country life. This fairytale is true. A pleasant drive up the 101 to the 158 puts you in Solvang at the **Alisal Ranch and Resort**.

The cowhands are good to recite Alisal's history. This 10,000 acre working dude ranch opened for guests in 1946. Juan José Carillo was given the land for his participation in the Portola Trek of 1785 that covered the state top to bottom.

The 73 comfortable rooms are child and adult comfortable, unpretentious and decorated in classic California Ranch design. Some are set up like cabins and all have wood burning fireplaces. Family memories are made at the Alisal. I met one family of 15 that have been coming to the Ranch since 1977. My husband and I were invited to their reunion. We sat outside by the pool where it took them all afternoon into the evening to build a giant bonfire.

The supervised activities for the smaller children include collecting eggs in the barn, painting, crafts classes and petting zoos. The schedule is delivered to your room the night before. While the kids are busy you can enjoy the 6,000 square foot spa and fitness center or a round of golf at either the Ranch or River Course. All ages can spend family time together on the tennis courts, biking, boating and fishing at the 100 acre spring fed lake. There we spotted the American bald eagle, deer, mallard ducks, wild tur-



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key and big mouth bass. Meals are included in your stay and are served in the Ranch room. Families dress for dinner. Chef Pascal Gode' creates fantastic ranch cuisine that changes daily.

There are more genuinely happy kids here than at the happiest place on earth. The Alisal is a fairy tale place for all ages. There are over 50 miles of riding trails. We rode horseback with about 6 little girls (and their parents) for a beautiful 3 mile breakfast ride from the barn to the Old Adobe. It was led by a handsome cowboy and the girls giggled the whole ride. We all dismounted under giant sycamores, had fabulous flapjacks and were entertained by a singing cowboy and cowboy poetry. Ah...memories of the Cowboy Festival in sunny Santa Clarita. The SCV is great for families and so is the Alisal Ranch: the perfect home away from home.

The price for a minimum two-night stay starts at \$495 for two. Some activities are included and others are reasonably priced. Visit www.alisalranch.com Call for special requests: (805) 688-6411.

