



One of the guest rooms at the Britt Scripps Inn is in the Carriage House, shaded by a 141-year-old camphor tree.

Creature comfort gets free rein at these lodgings

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SAN DIEGO

Two boutique hotels and an upscale bed-and-breakfast inn, all of which opened their doors relatively recently, await San Diego visitors seeking accommodations beyond the homogeneity of the chain hotels.

One is near Balboa Park, another in lower downtown, the third on a bluff overlooking Pacific Beach. And each has carved out a distinct and welcoming personality.

Britt Scripps Inn

It's less than 15 minutes by foot from the front door of this inn to anywhere in San Diego's Balboa Park you might want to visit: Old Globe Theatre, San Diego Zoo, Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, San Diego Museum of Art.

And if that proximity isn't reason enough to idle away a few nights in the converted Queen Anne building in Banker's Hill, the Britt Scripps staff will supply a few dozen more at no extra charge. Owner Gordon Hattersley III, who bought the house in 2001, spent some \$6 million restoring the house and grounds to upscale standards.

The care shows. The inn's nine rooms, all themed, are spectacular — lush, rich in detail, artfully blending elements and amenities that are

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Boutique hotels offer a charming attention to detail

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both classic and contemporary.

We stayed in the second-floor Renaissance Room, which, people assured us, is "one of the most romantic rooms in the inn." Plum-colored with an array of curtains, tassels and fringe on everything from coverlets to lamps, the room offered a flat-screen TV in an ornate armoire and towel warmers in the bathroom.

The bed was so high off the ground you practically needed a stepladder to reach it. And each night we arrived "home" to turned-down sheets with exotic truffles on the pillow.

They know food very well indeed at the Britt Scripps. The homemade breakfasts on a rotating menu brim with fruit, breads and exotic omelettes. The staff wines and — partially — dines you again with vino and appetizers in the parlor during the late afternoon.

That gathering is a choice opportunity to mingle with other guests and discuss play-going or Comicon conventioning, as the case may be.

Otherwise, the temptation never to leave those gorgeous sleeping quarters is awfully strong.

■ 406 Maple St., San Diego. Room rates from \$299. www.brittscripps.com; (888) 881-1991.