

# away

Life's intermissions.



The Music Alcove at Britt Scripps Inn

Britannia no longer rules the waves, but it continues to exert a strong architectural influence on San Diego. From the Hotel Del Coronado to the Gaslamp Quarter, Victorian buildings are an integral part of the city's character.

One Victorian property with ties to prominent early San Diegans recently took on new luster as a revamped inn. The **Britt Scripps Inn**, just west of Balboa Park in Banker's Hill, was built around 1887 and was first occupied by Eugene W. Britt, an attorney specializing in water rights. The lots on which the Queen Anne-style home was built were originally owned by the father of modern San Diego, Alonzo Horton, in an area once known as Horton's Addition.

After seven years, Britt sold to Edward Scripps, whose family name now adorns everything from hospitals and oceanic research facilities to colleges and newspapers. The Scripps family owned the home for more than 45 years, and two Scripps children were born there, but the eccentric newspaper publisher mainly lived on his 2,100-acre ranch (now the Scripps Ranch suburb) on the barren outskirts of town.

The property, a registered historic landmark, has seen only a few other owners since. It has been a private residence, teahouse, bed and

breakfast, and law office. Enter hotelier Gordon Hattersley III, who purchased the site in 2001.

After some \$6 million in restoration, the Britt Scripps Inn debuted on Valentine's Day last year. The home and grounds had been transformed into a nine-room "estate hotel" that gloriously recaptures a bygone era.

Fanatical respect was paid to detail. Period photos of the interior were used to recreate light fixtures.

Each guest room is different and has a name—such as Golden Oak, Gothic and Renaissance—rather than a number. Inside, features include hand-carved beds with tapestry bedding (and 1,000-thread-count sheets), fleur-de-lis-embossed crown moulding and claw-foot tubs.

"I see something different every time I come into a room," says assistant manager Eileen White. "There are guests who come nine times [in order to] stay in each room."

High-tech elements—flat-screen TVs (usually hidden), wireless Internet connection,



The Renaissance Room