

## Emerald Iguana: Ojai's Hidden Treasure

I found a little slice of paradise at the [Emerald Iguana](#) in Ojai, California. Tucked under towering century-old oaks, [Emerald Iguana](#) is one of Ojai's hidden treasures. Just a few blocks off Ojai's main street, it's a perfect romantic retreat, or great for girlfriends wanting to escape from life for a little while.

Immediately when I stepped inside the gate and onto the patio, where the office sits alongside the small pool, I knew I'd found someplace special. After checking in, my lovely host showed me to my cottage. I was fortunate enough to stay in the 'Frog' cottage. The only structure still on the property dating back to the original 1906 construction, the Frog's rock exterior lends to its air of fairy tale mystic. Vines cover its outside walls and a wide front porch with pillow-filled bench greet guests before they ever step inside. Each evening during my stay, the innkeeper lit the little lanterns scattered about, guiding me home as I returned from an evening out.

My first step inside left me, literally, saying "wow." The sweeping vaulted ceiling opens up overhead with wide skylights. The large front room offers a living area with large furnishings and a gas stove, a striking wooden dining table that could easily seat 8, and a full kitchen off to one side. The unique thing about all the rooms, suites and cottages at Emerald Iguana is that each one is individually decorated. Frog offers beautiful dark wood antiques in an Old World style. Each unit features works by local artists on the walls and the art is available for purchase.

I meandered through the front room, examining little treasures as I went, and made my way to the large bedroom. It featured a welcoming bed, rock fireplace, and full bath with whirlpool tub. Little twinkling lights over the bed offered a touch of whimsy.

There are a variety of room types available at [The Emerald Iguana](#), all scattered around the tranquil lush grounds. There are single rooms, suites, and private cottages with full kitchens. Many can connect, offering even more room options. Most have private patios and fireplaces or stoves. They all have unique designs. The award-winning architect and owner Marc Whitman created what he calls a Craftsman/Art Nouveau style that makes for a comfortable, whimsical retreat.



Frog House Cottage, Emerald Iguana. Photo courtesy Emerald Iguana



Frog House Living Room at Emerald Iguana. Photo courtesy Emerald Iguana

In addition to the amazing sense of place, amenities add a great touch to a stay at [Emerald Iguana](#). In-room massages are available. Rooms have at least one flat-panel television. Complimentary high-speed Internet service is available throughout the property and in all of the cottages and rooms. A continental breakfast served around the pool each morning is also a nice touch. The owners serve locally-baked pastries, along with the usual yogurt, boiled eggs, bagels, juice, tea, and coffee.

[Emerald Iguana](#) offers several packages that combine stays with restaurant credits and spa treatments. Mid-week packages are especially reasonable. They can be found on the inn's website at <http://www.emeraldiguana.com> or by calling the inn at 805-646-5277.

One of the things I found most intriguing in the Frog was the leather-bound journal where travelers from around the world record their thoughts on staying in the charming cottage. Each one perfectly describes the experience I had that made this one of the most unique and welcoming inns I've found anywhere I've ever traveled:

*"I breathe so deeply here."*

*"Paradise is found."*

*"A beautiful place of peace in a busy world."*

*"I cannot imagine a more perfect place to be."*

*"You can't help but smile as you see the whimsical details hidden in plain sight."*



Frog House Bedroom at Emerald Iguana. Photo courtesy Emerald Iguana



The Emerald Iguana, Ojai California. Photo by Susan Lanier-Graham

But the one notation in the journal that best summed up the peaceful [Emerald Iguana](#) itself:

*"It was magic*

*it was perfect*

*it was home..."*

### **The Emerald Iguana**

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<http://www.emeraldiguana.com>