

Healing

lifestyles & spas
magazine

Featuring: Bootcamp for Goddesses



From Fear to Fortitude

**Sierra Bender's Bootcamp for Goddesses
Awakens the Inner Divinity**

By Felicia Tomasko

I admit it. I was more than a little intimidated when I first looked at the picture of Sierra Bender advertising her women's retreat, **Bootcamp for Goddesses**. Dressed in combat fatigues, with a set of killer abs and a mane of wild brown hair, she was striking a pose beneath a waterfall. But there was something about her warrior nature and the description of the retreat that beckoned. I was intrigued by the combination of yoga, fitness, African drumming, and the promise of a sweat lodge. Couple those enticements with the fact that Bender teaches at gorgeous retreat centers across the country, and I was sold, with only a little trepidation.

At the Crossings, located in the hill country outside of Austin, Texas, eighteen women converged for a six-night Bootcamp for Goddesses retreat. The women came from across the country. Although two mother-daughter teams and some friends journeyed together, the rest of us traveled solo, but over the week, we became sisters.

From the first moments of the retreat, Bender created loving, sacred space within the nooks and crannies of the Crossings'

grounds, in the sanctuary, under the blue sky, and within our yoga practice space. To continue to frame the sacredness of each day, we opened each morning by lighting a candle and placing it on a group altar, to remind us, as Bender said, "That it is our responsibility to keep our inner light lit."

Throughout the week, via twice-daily yoga sessions; early morning silent hikes; afternoon talks on health and fitness, aromatherapy, and nutrition; an outdoor dancing session set to African drums and meals featuring laughter and tears, Bender encouraged us to fire up our inner lights.

For more information about Bootcamp for Goddesses call (570) 994-0014 or visit www.bootcampforgoddesses.com.

For more information about the Crossings call (877) 944-3003 or visit www.thecrossingsaustin.com.

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