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**LEGEND OF THE BLUE COYOTE COMES TO LIFE WITH SIGNATURE TREATMENT  
AT AJI SPA AT SHERATON WILD HORSE PASS RESORT & SPA**

PHOENIX, ARIZ. – February 2003 -- Native American flute music plays softly in the background while the therapist gently brushes the body, exfoliating the skin. An application of Azulene follows, to soothe, nourish and heal. While reclining in an aromatherapy steam capsule, the body is lightly coated with a sky blue “mud.” The lid of the steam capsule is then closed, and for 15 glorious minutes the senses are tantalized by the steam’s aromas and a soothing scalp massage, while the pores absorb the mud, activated by the warm steam. After a private rain shower to rinse off the mud, the therapist applies a hydrating cedar-sage oil and completes the treatment with a full body massage.

The **Blue Coyote Wrap**, a signature treatment at the new Aji Spa at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa, is as cleansing an experience for the guest as it is for the coyote in the legend that inspired the treatment (legend attached).

In the Pima legend of the Bluebird and Coyote, the coyote is envious of the bluebird’s beautiful blue color, so follows the bluebird’s instructions to turn his own coat blue. As this is not his natural state, he ultimately sheds the blue color and returns to his true earth color ... but more beautiful than before.

The coating and rinsing of the blue mud during the **Blue Coyote Wrap** symbolizes the body’s process of releasing toxins and tension, and returning to a natural state of tranquility, fully relaxed.

Cristin Korbakes, spa director, explains that the **Blue Coyote Wrap** is a metaphor for the spa as a whole -- offering unique treatments and an environment where guests can free themselves from stress and unreasonable expectations they face daily, and return to a natural state of peace. The use of the aromatherapy steam capsule, instead of wrapping the body in plastic, is unique to the Aji Spa. Guests find it far less restricting and a much more comfortable, enjoyable experience.

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***Aji ... the experience***

“We have created a serene environment reflective of the values and lifestyle of the Pima and Maricopa Indians who live here – serenity, tranquility, simplicity, freedom and authenticity,” says Korbakes. “In the Pima language, Aji means sanctuary, and we offer a calming “sanctuary” where our guests can indulge their spirits with truly beneficial treatments, and return to their lives refreshed and relaxed.”

Korbakes stressed that each treatment has been created to address a specific need, and a great deal of attention has been paid to adding the extra touches that differentiate the Aji Spa. “For example, our massage tables are heated, and in every massage, we wrap the feet and drape the back in warm towels after the therapist has worked on those parts of the body.”

All treatments, whether massages, body wraps, exfoliating body treatments, facials, and fitness programs, have been created to showcase the language and philosophies of the Pima and Maricopa tribes. Choices for Thagimun (massage) include Hothai (Gila River Rock Massage), Shuhthagi (Watsu) and Heosig (Aromatherapy Massage) to name a few. Wihosha (facial) includes Tashogith (Purifying White Clay Facial) which utilizes the white clay that has been indigenous to the Gila River Indian Community for centuries; Kahagam (Bluebird Facial), a spa signature treatment; and Juhk (Aji Rain Facial).

Korbakes says her wish for every spa client is to be transported from their everyday concerns and to a more balanced place. “This is the most peaceful environment, even though we’re only 15 minutes from the airport and the heart of Phoenix. When you come to Aji, you feel like you’re entering a retreat, a place where you can get away from it all and find renewal.”

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***Aji ... the environment***

Located in the Gila River Indian Community, just 11 miles from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, the Aji Spa was inspired by the dual meaning of “Aji” in the cultures of the Pima and Maricopa tribes. In times of battle, women and children were sent to Aji, a safe haven in the mountains of the Gila River Valley of Phoenix. Aji also refers to a sanctuary high in the world from which one can see great distances with clarity.

True to the understated lifestyles of the Pima and Maricopa people, the spa’s design and decor is simple, yet elegant. As with the entire Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort, water is a constant presence. The tribes value water as life itself -- cleansing, nourishing, refreshing. The spa features expansive vistas and an exterior courtyard with a free-form pool adjacent to the Gila River that flows throughout the resort. A stone waterfall running from floor to ceiling greets guests as they enter the lobby. Showers are designed as rain showers. Guests may also sit under a therapeutic waterfall to relax the neck and shoulders.

The overall decor features dark woods, leather couches, plush fabrics and natural desert colors of taupe, terra cotta and sage. Round corners and curves, and the placement of things in fours, such as chairs and light fixtures in the lobby, represent the cyclical nature of life. Wave patterns in the structure and design of the salon carry through the water theme.

The dome structure and shapes throughout the spa represent the historic dwellings, or Olan Ki, that provided protection from the winter elements. A traditional Olan Ki, made from arrow weed, was created by the native community and is situated in the pool area.

Artwork expressing the legends of the tribes is present in every area. The lobby features the creation story of Earth Maker, Elder Brother, Vulture and Coyote in mosaic, and a beautiful sunset painting in the dome above. The entrance to the fitness studio features five paintings and one mosaic representing the metamorphosis of the butterfly, another important symbol and story. Iron screens tell the story of the twin boys. Beautiful paintings, petroglyph drawings and basket patterns grace the floors, walls and ceilings of the spa. Pottery, sculptures and weavings are placed throughout.

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*Blue Coyote Wrap – Page Four*

The 17,500-square-foot spa has 17 treatment rooms with individual temperature controls, and includes some designed specifically for hydrotherapy, Vichy treatments and companion massages. A fitness center, full service salon, men's and women's locker rooms complete with private hot tubs and saunas, a cold plunge in the men's locker room, private and coed relaxation lounges, a juice bar, a retail shop, and a pool exclusively reserved for Watsu treatments, are also included.

For more information:

- **Spa** treatments and reservations, call 520-796-8416
- **Resort** rates and packages, call 866-837-4156

Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa, owned by the Gila River Indian Community and located on their 372,000-acre reservation, is a total destination resort showcasing the heritage, culture, art and legends of the Pima and Maricopa tribes. Located in the high Sonoran Desert on an expanse of rugged landscape where the ancient vistas, mountains and roaming wild horses remain untouched, the resort is just 11 miles from Sky Harbor airport and the heart of metropolitan Phoenix. Resort offerings include: 500 culturally themed rooms; the 17,500 square-foot Native American Aji Spa; two 18-hole golf courses managed by Troon Golf; the 1,000-acre Koli Equestrian Center; a 2.5-mile replica of the indigenous Gila River meandering through the property; native inspired cuisine designed by James Beard Award winner Janos Wilder; over 100,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event and meeting space; and the adjacent Wild Horse Pass Casino.

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