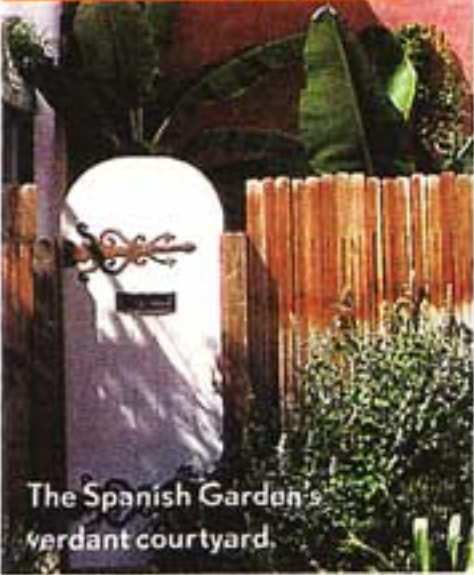


INN OF THE MONTH

SANTA BARBARA SECRET

Fig trees and rubber duckies: not your standard B&B fodder. Yet the **Inn of the Spanish Garden** (915 Garden St.; 805/564-4700; www.spanishgardeninn.com; doubles from \$185) is anything but ordinary. The 23 guest rooms are decorated in Spanish Mission style—warm ochre walls, dark wood furnishings, fireplaces. Beyond the obligatory Frette linens, Molton Brown bath products, and oversized tubs, downtown Santa Barbara's only luxury inn delivers the best kind of access. After morning laps in the pool and breakfast on your private terrace overlooking a blooming courtyard of wisteria and bougainvillea, you can easily walk to



The Spanish Garden's verdant courtyard.

the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (the permanent collection is one of California's finest), then to State Street for some low-impact shopping. Later, retreat to **Ca' Dario** (37 E. Victoria St.; 805/884-9419; dinner for two \$60), a shoe box-sized trattoria off the main drag, for Italian home-cooking and plenty of local gossip. —NILOUFAR MOTAMED