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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Bishop's Lodge – A Southwest 'country estate'

Santa Fe, NM – Amid the colorful canyons and arroyos of the desert Southwest, the lush lawns and flowering gardens of the Tesuque Valley provide an oasis of green. That's why when Jean-Baptiste Lamy came to Santa Fe in 1851 as New Mexico's first bishop, he bought a parcel of land in the Tesuque Valley and made it his country retreat. He cultivated his gardens and introduced non-native fruit trees and flowers that attracted visitors for years to come.

After Lamy's death, the property was owned by the Pulitzer family of St. Louis, and then in 1918 it became "Bishop's Lodge" under the ownership of the Thorpe family from Denver. The Thorpes ran the resort until 1998. Lamy's 450-acre property is now the site of Bishop's Lodge Ranch Resort & Spa and is managed by Prism Hotels & Resorts of Dallas.

Colorful reminders of nearly four centuries of Spanish, Native American and Southwestern cultures endure at Bishop's Lodge. The award-winning ShaNah Spa honors its spiritual predecessors with Native American-influenced treatments and techniques. Las Fuentes Restaurant & Bar serves creative American cuisine with indigenous influences. Most profoundly, the panoramic views span mountains, desert, forest and Lamy's precious gardens.

The xeriscaped grounds and lush gardens at Bishop's Lodge give life to outdoor weddings, conference receptions, family events, and a children's camp. They surround and decorate 111 deluxe and ranch-style rooms and the exclusive hillside Villas, a swimming pool, and a spa.

The entry road is canopied with the far-reaching branches of elm and oak trees. On one side of the road a waterfall cascades down a rocky slope, on the other side an ornamental pond is surrounded by cottonwoods, blue spruce and ponderosa pines. Across the Little Tesuque Creek are lush green lawns and gardens flowering with hollyhock, roses, and phlox.

Ungroomed areas include the horse stables and a fishpond shaded by cottonwoods. The Little Tesuque Creek runs ambles next to a children's playground area, a shaded gazebo and a seasonal sweat lodge.

Water conservation is a big issue in the Southwest where droughts cycle in and out over several years. Bishop's Lodge has a well on the property that supplies all the water for the resort and spa, and water is reclaimed for all garden irrigation and lawn watering.

Chief Engineer Dan Evert is responsible for maintaining the grounds and the water treatment facility on the property. He came to Bishop's Lodge in 2005 with 14 years of experience at Tenaya Lodge in California where for the last 8 years he was Assistant Chief Engineer overseeing 244 rooms, 35 acres and 4 wells.

At Bishop's Lodge, Evert oversees 18 buildings, 111 rooms, 150 groomed acres and a staff of seven engineers and a landscaping crew of five.

Lawns are watered with a spray sprinkler system scheduled to avoid outdoor events, and xeriscape areas like the ShaNah Spa and Wellness Center garden have a drip irrigation system. Ungroomed areas, like hillsides and the horse stables, depend on the weather to maintain their natural beauty.

"Since Bishop's Lodge is a ranch resort, we lean towards a natural look," says Dan Evert. "We keep maintenance simple and efficient because of the well water source."

Evert says he doesn't use soil amendments or fertilizers because the reclaimed well water is rich in nutrients. He keeps the gardens in bloom throughout the growing season with minimal pruning, pinching back buds to prevent seeding, and cleaning up scrubs to keep them neat. They also bring in some perennials for late fall and early spring to add color.

"We put small pinon trees in flower pots for the winter," Evert says. "In spring we remove and replant them before putting in flowers."

To avoid insects, Evert says he has some insecticide spraying done around building perimeters if there is a problem. "We don't do any field spraying and we are careful to avoid contamination of the ground water," he says.

Native plants include pinons, cottonwoods, Russian sage, and lavender. Bishop Lamy planted apple, apricot, and pear trees, grapevines, creeping felix, phlox, and climbing rose to name a few. He also had an herb garden, which is being revitalized this season.

Ranked by **Travel & Leisure magazine** as one of America's premier retreats, the Bishop's Lodge Ranch Resort & Spa offers the resort-style family vacations, weddings, and conference facilities.

Bishop's Lodge Ranch Resort & Spa is managed by Prism Hotels & Resorts, whose clients also include Marriott, Hilton, Radisson, Embassy Suites, and Holiday Inn. To make a reservation, call 800-732-2240 or visit www.bishopslodge.com.

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