

THE WORLD'S BEST SPAS

ULTIMATE



ESCAPES

IN THIS INCREASINGLY HECTIC, ON-THE-MOVE, ALWAYS-ON CULTURE, MORE AND MORE TRAVELERS ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO UNPLUG WITHOUT COMPLETELY GOING OFF THE GRID. FROM URBAN OASES TO CARIBBEAN RETREATS AND ALPINE ESCAPES, THESE ARE SOME OF THE BEST SPAS AROUND THE WORLD. BY CELIA SHATZMAN WITH ELIZABETH DEHN



THIS PAGE: A treatment room at Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Puerto Rico. PREVIOUS PAGE: Relaxing between treatments at the Estrella Spa in Palm Springs.

The chic pool at the Estrella Spa in Palm Springs.



Alchemy & Style in the Desert

ESTRELLA SPA AT AVALON PALM SPRINGS, PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

There's a reason Palm Springs has become a buzzing destination: chic hotels, hot springs, spas, famed midcentury-modern architecture and world-class golf courses—what's not to like? And this boutique hotel perfectly embodies the California lifestyle with its Kelly Wearstler design and the American Medicinal Arts as its spa guru.

A collective of holistic herbalists, healers, designers, entrepreneurs and cultural leaders, AMA focuses on alchemy and holistic health—a mission that's reflected in its unusual treatments. The Waxing Moon Phase Ritual, only offered from the new moon to full moon, starts with a rich full-body exfoliation with Fair Trade ingredients, including sugar, organic shea butter and jojoba oil; a full-body moisturizing rubdown that zones in on a hand and foot massage; a warm oil scalp treatment with palmarosa and anise; and a facial with bilberry, licorice and Saint John's wort to restore and plump skin. Then there's build-your-own herbed oils, life coach sessions and therapeutic yoga, plus guided bike tours, hikes and meditations.

Off property, the main shopping district along Palm Canyon Drive features on-point restaurants (catch breakfast at Cheeky's), vintage boutiques (Déjà Vu Vintage Finery) and chic design shops (Modernway). Coachella Valley boasts

Mediterranean Retreat

SHA WELLNESS CLINIC, ALICANTE, SPAIN

Travelers from all over the globe flock to this 50,000-square-foot luxury health resort south of Valencia, Spain. Don't expect just massages here—the staff of 250, which includes renowned physicians, seamlessly integrate traditional Western medicine and Eastern therapies to curate a bespoke experience for each guest.

SHA is on top of health trends with its Telomere Length Analysis, advanced gene testing that determines a patient's "actual" age versus his or her biological age. The new Cognitive Development Unit has groundbreaking programs and activities to optimize brain function, pinpointing areas where guests are vulnerable to diseases such as Alzheimer's and prescribing prevention solutions such as mental exercises.

SHA has pools, fitness areas and more than 80 treatment rooms, and guests can explore everything from natural therapies to aesthetic medicine and cognitive stimulation. Each person has an individual nutrition program, and a team of chefs whips up scrumptious macrobiotic meals. The spacious 93 guest suites have terraces and views of the charming village of Altea and the Mediterranean. Between treatments and relaxation time, there are plenty of complimentary activities to keep you busy on the property, including yoga classes, Pilates, meditation, health talks with visiting speakers, macrobiotic cooking classes, morning walks to the beach and other surrounding areas, and a nightly movie in the on-site theater. Those who want to explore on their own can wander around the old town or take a 10-minute drive to the beach. shawellnessclinic.com/en



great hiking, biking and horseback riding, and Joshua Tree National Park is a 45-minute drive away. It's worth the trek to see the striking desert landscape and intriguing geological structures. For a view from the top, take the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway two and a half miles up the cliffs of Chino Canyon.

Explore the renowned arts scene at the Palm Springs Art Museum—with special exhibits such as *Contemporary Glass*, showcasing a variety of glass sculpture—and get the scoop on local architecture at its new Architecture and Design Center just a few blocks away. avalonpalmsprings.com

ALPINE ESCAPE

KRONENHOF SPA AT GRAND HOTEL KRONENHOF, ST. MORITZ, SWITZERLAND

Every area of this 2,000-square-meter spa has views of the Swiss alpine forest, water or mountains, so nature is well integrated into its state-of-the-art facilities. The hotel has a swimming pool, steam room, relaxation floating grotto with underwater music, saltwater grotto, sauna, footbaths, solarium, gym and hair salon. kronenhof.com



ISLAND TIME

THE SPA WITHOUT WALLS AT FAIRMONT ORCHID, BIG ISLAND, HAWAII

Local traditions and ingredients are incorporated into this spa on the Kohala Coast, where the sound of soothing water and the sight of palm trees, white coral and black lava set the scene in eight waterfall huts and six oceanside huts. The Hiwa-hiwa treatment features a mamaki volcanic foot wrap that's the ultimate stress reliever. fairmont.com/orchid-hawaii/spa



PARADISE FOUND

THE PALMS TURKS & CAICOS

Spanning more than an acre, the treatment rooms here surround a reflecting pool. Many of the treatments are inspired by Caribbean traditions: the Mother of Pearl features crushed conch shells blended with aromatherapy oil for a full-body exfoliation. thepalmstc.com

RIGHT-HAND PAGE: PREVIOUS SPREAD: COURTESY OF DORADO BEACH, ARITZ-CARLTON RESERVE; THIS PAGE: CRISTÓBAL PRADO COURBARD (SHA WELLNESS CLINIC); COURTESY OF FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS (FAIRMONT ORCHID); COURTESY REGENT PALMS TURKS & CAICOS

SWEET RETREAT

RANCHO LA PUERTA,
TECATE, MEXICO

■ The newest option at this spa destination south of San Diego is the Xocolatl Skin Replenishment, which has a fun DIY spin: Guests make the chocolate mask their therapist will use on them in the 90-minute treatment. Skin is restored and calmed with a body butter scrub made of sugar and cacao butter followed by a mask of yogurt and honey. rancholapuerta.com



Tropical Bliss

SPA BOTÁNICO AT DORADO BEACH,
A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE, PUERTO RICO

Nestled within a pineapple garden, this five-acre spa oasis in Puerto Rico lives up to its name with its focus on nature. The scents of bay rum leaves, lemongrass and ginger waft over to two open-air Tree House treatments rooms, where guests can bliss out during a hammock massage. Sway back and forth while a therapist under the hammock works the pressure points on your back, hands and feet. The resort recently added a spa menu just for gents, including the Four Point Tune-Up: a head, shoulder and neck massage; a facial and neck hair groom; a foot and hand massage; and a nail trim and buff. ritzcarlton.com

EASTERN OASIS

ANANTARA SPA AT
THE PULI HOTEL & SPA,
SHANGHAI

Much like the city of Shanghai itself, the ancient merges with the modern at The Puli Hotel & Spa, centrally located in the Jing'an District. Old healing philosophies from China, Thailand and Indiat get a contemporary spin, with a spa menu inspired by the healing powers of tea. The popular Thai Herbal Compress Massage starts with a warm herbal poultice filled therapeutic Thai herbs and spices followed by a full-body massage. Post treatment, go for a dip in the 82-foot infinity lap pool overlooking Jing'an Park. thepuli.com



White-Hot Spot

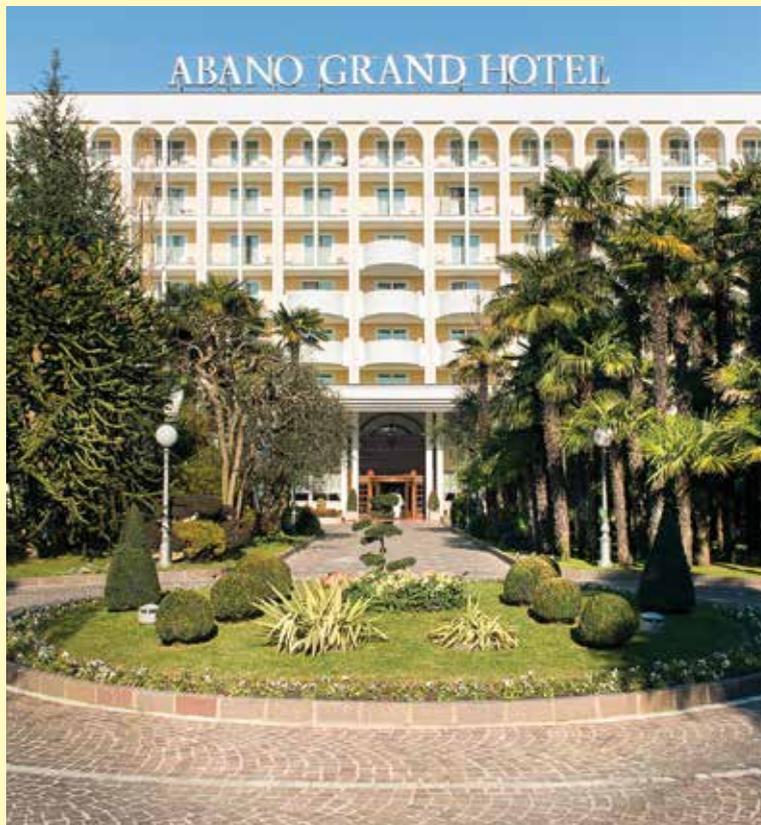
THE SPA AT VICEROY, MIAMI

The grandiose spa at the Viceroy is exactly how you picture a luxury spa in Miami: The intoxicatingly chic 28,000-square-foot space was designed by Philippe Starck and boasts floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Key Biscayne and Biscayne Bay. A yellow chandelier with 4,000 pieces of Murano glass is the accent piece over the sprawling Water Lounge with a floating library, reflecting pond and hot and cold plunge pools. The spa also has red-wood saunas and a eucalyptus steam room, a party room, a refreshment bar and even its own movie theater. Can't-miss treatments include the new BABOR Reversive Anti-Aging Facial, aimed at restoring radiance while reducing fine lines through a firming massage, and Raindrop Therapy—seven essential oils fall like raindrops along your spine, combining massage, reflexology and stretching to relax you physically and mentally.

If you want something a little more labor intensive, hit the spa's gym for a barre session or Surfset class, which simulates the real deal to build lean muscle and blast calories—or try the cardio theater, yoga, Pilates or spinning studio. Afterward, recover at the two-acre pool deck with its viewing deck, wading pool, 80-person (!) hot tub and the longest infinity-edge pool in Florida. The view is even better

when you order a coconut infused with your favorite rum. After dark, party at FIFTY Ultra Lounge and admire the rooftop views with DJs spinning on weekends.

Nearby in downtown Miami is NAOE, serving arguably the best sushi in town—but don't expect a menu, as the chef prefers to surprise his guests. The Design District is also just 10 minutes away from the property, with great boutiques and an impressive restaurant scene, including Michael's Genuine Food & Drink for dinner and Crumb on Parchment for lunch. Venture to Little Havana for an authentic Cuban experience. viceroyspa.com



Spa Amore

ABANO GRAND HOTEL,
ABANO TERME, ITALY

Located 30 miles and an easy train ride from Venice, Abano Terme has long been overshadowed by its grander sister by the sea and overlooked by gondola-happy tourists who don't know it exists. But the small, unassuming town nestled in the lush Euganean foothills in the province of Padua is one of the oldest resort areas in Europe and has something that no canal can claim: hot springs.

Used medicinally since Roman times, the thermal water in Abano Terme reaches depths of 10,000 feet and 186 degree Fahrenheit. It's cooled to body temperature before filling the hotels' pools. Mineral-rich and free from bacteria and pollution, thermal water can alleviate back pain and aching muscles, relieve respiratory issues when inhaled and soothe skin disorders. My stubborn eczema vanished after just two days of floating in the warm pools.

Although there are dozens of spas in Abano Terme, from boutique hotels to public pools, the most luxurious way to experience the region's natural resources is by staying at the city's crown jewel, the Abano Grand Hotel. It's the only five-star "deluxe" hotel in the province, a sought-after designation that basically means you'll never lift a finger during your stay. Believe me, I tried.

To truly appreciate the abundance of Abano Grand, you need to leave two things at home: expectations and inhibitions. The former is particularly essential if you're more accustomed to state-side spas. Yes, there will be plenty of fluffy robes, fresh-pressed green drinks and obscene amounts of scalp massage, but that's where the similarities between most American and true European spas such as Abano Grand end.

In Italy, thermal treatments are just that: treatments, often medically sanctioned and covered by insurance. A deep-tissue massage isn't considered a luxury, it may literally be a prescription for alleviating stress or injury. All of Abano Grand's therapeutic treatments are developed and overseen by the medical team. Although you are welcome to select wellness treatments from an extensive and exotic-sounding menu, guests undergo a physical assessment to determine their recommended therapeutic regimen.

"Just like you might meet friends for happy hour, Italians say, 'Let's go to the thermal,'" says Chiara Borile, whose family owns the Abano Grand along with four other spa-hotels in the town. "It's part of our culture." —Elizabeth Dehn



COURTESY VILLA STÉPHANIE; COURTESY CHÂTEAU SAINT-MARTIN & SPA; COURTESY OF DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE (SPA BOTÁNICO AT DORADO BEACH); CHRISTIAN HOKAN (SPA AT VICEROY, MIAMI)

STEPHANO SCATA



Water World

AIRE ANCIENT BATHS, NEW YORK CITY

As soon you as enter the serene Aire Baths, it feels like you're a world away from the buzzy Tribeca neighborhood outside. Housed in a historic building, Aire puts an intriguing spin on the Greek and Roman bathhouse tradition. The dark candlelit baths are located underground, giving it a mysterious, romantic vibe. Designed to activate all five senses and soothe the body and mind, different thermal baths of various temperatures fill the 16,000-square-foot space, including an ice pool and a salt-water flotarium. There's also a steam room with aromatherapy, a relaxation area where you rest on hot marble stones and a treatment room overlooking the baths. Opt for the Red Wine Ritual, a 30-minute bath in red wine, to soak up the antioxidants and hydrate the skin, followed by a 90-minute four-handed body experience. Flamenco music fills the baths on Tuesday and Friday nights courtesy of a live acoustic band. ancientbathsny.com

The Royal Treatment

THERMES MARINS, MONTE-CARLO

Monaco is practically synonymous with elegant luxury, and this spa fits right in. The four-story wellness center overlooks the Mediterranean and is part of the Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer. Sea water and manual relaxation therapies take center stage here, as does its Cryotherapy Room—the only spa in Europe that boasts one. Already famous as an antiaging treatment in the Nordic countries and popular with athletes to speed up recovery time and performance, the Cryotherapy Room goes from 60° Celsius to 110° in just 180 seconds. Sessions can be used to treat everything from jet lag to sleep disorders, inflammatory diseases and even regular old stress. Massages and body treatments, such as the Gold & Champagne—a rich bath, gold-infused scrub and a collagen body wrap—are on the menu, and the spa also features a hammam, sauna, solarium, fitness area, heated seawater pool, salons and boutique. L'Hirondelle, the spa's restaurant, is also a highlight, blending high gastronomy with holistic nutrition.

Explore Monaco 007-style by getting the James Bond experience at the Le Bar Américain and the striking belle époque Casino de Monte-Carlo, which appears in *Never Say Never Again* and *GoldenEye*. Get your culture fix at the Prince's Palace, the official residence of the prince of Monaco. Built in 1215 by the Genoese on the site of a fortress, you can trace history from the Renaissance through the Napoleonic era.

Arrive at 11:55 a.m. to catch the daily changing of the guard, the Carabiniers du Prince. Visit the Monte-Carlo Pavilions to be dazzled by the futuristic architecture and stay for the shopping. The space was created to last only four years, correlating with the length of the renovations at Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo and the Sporting d'Hiver. thermesmarinsmontecarlo.com



RAYMOND PATRICK (AIRE ANCIENT BATHS); MONTE-CARLO SOCIÉTÉ DES BAINS DE MER (THERMES MARINS); GERRY O'LEARY (TALISE OTTOMAN SPA)



COFFEE BREAK

KUO SPA AT COSTA RICA MARRIOTT SAN JOSE

■ Housed in a colonial hacienda on a former coffee plantation, the Kuo Spa is offering its first open-air nighttime treatment, the Candlelight Experience. Enjoy an invigorating scrub made from volcanic ash and coffee while relaxing among the *Coffea Arabica* trees. The treatment concludes with a glass of wine, chocolate-covered strawberries and scented hydrotherapy. marriott.com

DESERT FLOWER

MII AMO, SEDONA, ARIZONA

■ The natural, dramatic red rock landscape of Boynton Canyon is the perfect backdrop for this 16-room, all-inclusive destination spa. Its customized approach to physical, mental and spiritual therapies is a blend of the enigmatic vibe of Sedona mixed with Native American traditions. miiamo.com

BIG SPA COUNTRY

SPA TOWN AT THE RESORT AT PAWSUP, MISSOULA, MONTANA

You won't find the typical babbling brook spa tunes played here—instead, nature provides the soundtrack, with an actual brook, birds tweeting and wind rustling in the trees. Get lost in this paradise of white treatment tents in a large meadow, where horses roam and pines provide shade. Kids and even pets have their own spa menu, while mom and dad can opt for the Montana Gold Rush, a massage with 24-karat gold flakes mixed with organic oil to leave skin firm and glowing. The spa director leads free outdoor yoga classes on select mornings with the mountains in full view. pawsup.com

Turkish Delight

TALISE OTTOMAN SPA, JUMEIRAH ZABEEL SARAY, DUBAI

Be transported to the Ottoman Empire at one of this spa's three traditional Turkish Hammams, built from marble and dark wood, with murals and mosaics adorning the sumptuous space. Chill out—literally—in the dazzling snow room, one of just four in the entire UAE, where they produce real snow. Inspired by the Finnish tradition of cooling off in the snow after the sauna, the cold temperature delivers a detoxifying effect as well as a metabolism jolt to improve skin tone while minimizing cellulite and wrinkles. The 86,000-square-foot spa also boasts 42 treatments rooms, eight hydrotherapy rooms, three steam rooms, eight saunas, flotation pools, three hot Jacuzzis, six hot stone beds, eight outdoor spa pavilions, two thalasso-therapy swimming pools, a beauty salon, a café and three relaxation lounges—as well as a fitness studio and full gym (pew!).

Go for a soothing swim in the almost 200-foot-long infinity pool overlooking the Arabian Gulf or head to the beach to relax in the sand—beach butlers will wait on you while your children stay busy at Sinbad's Kids Club. Top off a day of relaxation with a shopping spree at the hotel's Avenue of Indulgence, a carefully selected group of 16 premium boutiques. Jumeirah Zabeel Saray is also home to a 29-seat cinema, which hosts a variety of free screenings daily, as well as 10 restaurants and bars, including a supper club and a music hall with more than 10 live acts performed every night. If you like over-the-top resorts, Talise should fit the bill. jumeirah.com