

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

SPA BLISS

B Y B E K A H W R I G H T

Four Seasons Resort, Aviara, North San Diego

IF WHILE POURING BUBBLE BATH INTO YOUR TUB YOU EMIT A SIGH OF LONGING FOR A TRUE SPA EXPERIENCE, IT MAY be time to indulge. Have a hard time allowing yourself to escape? Simply pull out your calendar and mark "therapy" in an appointed time slot; then head out for a desperately needed mental health day.

At Roxbury Pilates Spa multitaskers will feel right at home. Pair physical therapy and a Pilates workout with a massage in this cozy unassuming building in Beverly Hills. Step inside and you'll get a gander at what appears to be a beautifully crafted torture device, or the Gyrotonic machine. The Roxbury, however, is all about relieving pain versus inflicting it. This couture spa's approach to the body, whether through Pilates or body treatments, is about strengthening and restoring. Follow your workout with a deep tissue massage under the capable hands of Doris LaRue. Knotted muscles as well as stored toxins submit to her will.

In the midst of bustling Century City is the tranquil haven of the Century Plaza's Spa Mystique. Feng shui principles promote a welcoming atmosphere in the bright, open, and airy facility. Relax in a lounge with floor-to-ceiling windows offering a view of the city below. Once you're escorted into a treatment room, paradise awaits. During a Bamboo Awakening Massage with Patricia Lumpkin, bamboo whisks are softly strummed over the body, stimulating circulation. The strength in Lumpkin's hands is apparent as she manipulates the body through a deep tissue massage that could double as a chiropractic adjustment. Follow this with an Akasuri scrub. Water rains down from a Vichy shower as your epidermis is scrubbed to a fine sheen. A calming ground cucumber paste is applied to the face before warm oil is massaged on the body.

Contentment abounds at Le Petit Retreat day spa in Larchmont Village. The French

island-inspired building welcomes with its use of the Chinese five elements, among them soft candlelight, imported teak furniture, beautiful artwork, a crackling fire, and a trickling fountain. For a head-to-toe treatment schedule the Serenity Package. Begin with adept co-owner Lysa Kustek helming an Aquasonic Lymphatic Facial, a form of dermabrasion requiring only water for its effectiveness. Light therapy simultaneously stimulates the body's chakras. From there, slip into a copper tub of milk and honey with added essential oils of lavender, rose, and



sage in the Aqua Latte and Flower Medley. Move on to the Warm Zen Stone Deep Tissue Treat with Jennifer Yi, who kneads muscles into submission. After the two-and-a-half-hour treatment you'll forget your impending schedule and sink into sweet oblivion.

Designed with the work-weary in mind, the Skin Spa of Encino's "Day of Wellness" is a six-and-a-half-hour combination of treatments for recharging the most sluggish of batteries. A Coffee Glow Body Polish kicks off the day, followed by a hydrotub session with an underwater lymphatic treatment. Next is a one-hour aromatherapy chi massage combined with a phytologic scalp treatment. The body is

then fueled with a lip-smacking spa lunch on the rooftop deck. Replenished, guests then partake in a one-and-a-half-hour European customized facial, capped off with a French manicure and pedicure. If all this pampering leaves visitors in need of a snooze, they need merely visit Skin Spa's Zen Sleep room and kick back in a zero-gravity chair.

If the beeping of your PDA alerting you to impending meetings is too difficult to ignore, consider leaving town for a spa visit. Tucked away in Santa Barbara is a luxury spa so exclusive, you'll only get its address once you've made a reservation. Victoria Kennedy and Carrie Macintyre will attend to your every need, from the perfect spa day to a guided tour through Santa Barbara, a limo drive through wine country, or a sunset sail. You'll want to indulge in the two-hour Ultimate Deluxe Pampering Package for a blissful treat that addresses every inch of your body. Begin with Sea Spa's signature massage paired with aromatherapy oils. Reflexology bestows attention on the hands and feet. Choose among three facial treatments — European seaweed, Papaya Oxygen, and the Sensitive Skin Facial. The face is then treated to a Chinese Herbal Facial Wrap along with Cellular Repair Misting and a Stress Point Facial Massage with collagen and special nutrients. You'll leave with both your skin and your soul restored.

After a day on the renowned golf course, pay a visit to the Spa at Four Seasons Resort Aviara and unkink with a golfer/sports massage. Want to go for nirvana? The spa has a treatment named for that very state that it achieves. After a gentle exfoliation with a hot towel wrap, an exotic blend of herbs and aromatic oils is massaged on the body, hair, and scalp, followed by a stream of warm oil dripped onto the "third eye" to help promote sublime calm. Afterward, loll in a cabana in the lush private gardens.

Heaven can be found on a cliff top in Laguna Beach at the Montage Spa and Resort. The Montage's "Surrender" program has spa

goers meet with a trained therapist to determine the treatment that would best suit their needs. This could range from "A Symphony in Massage," in which two therapists work in tandem over taut muscles, or the signature "Aroma Balancing Therapy," a 90-minute procedure in which essential oils are applied to the body, giving special attention to the scalp, face, hands, and feet. Guests can linger by the mosaic sun pool and relax to the sound of waves crashing against the rocks below.

Desert climate more to your liking? No worries. The newly opened The Well at the Miramonte Spa and Resort in Indian Wells is a Mediterranean escape to bliss. Signature treatments abound, from the Pittura Festa, a clay-painting treatment successfully masquerading as a party, to the use of the area's bounty of olive oil and grape seeds in lavish treatments. Couples can partake in simultaneous massages on the Balcone d'Terapia, indulge in a Watsu treatment, relax under


cascading water at the Riverbench, or share a Bagno Vino, a bubble bath with hydrating grape seed oil.

Affectionately known as Club Mud is the Glen Ivy Hot Springs Spa in Corona. The property has 17 pools, including indoor Roman baths and a saltwater spa, all of which beckon for their own experience. Speaking of experiences, find the elevator that descends into the earth to "the Grotto," an underground enclave where attendants are at the ready with a mixture of sea kelp and aloe vera to be brushed over your body. Allow the elements to sink in at the Grotto's Hydrating Chamber before rinsing off and heading back upstairs. Make a day of it with the Paradise Package, which includes an essential oil wrap, aromatherapy massage and signature facial, and manicure and pedicure.

Of course you can always feel like you've escaped the big city without actually leaving it by driving off into the Sunset—Boulevard—

that is. Spa-wise, the new kid on the block is the Beverly Hills Hotel Spa by La Prairie. Consider adding a bit of Old Hollywood glamour and scheduling a massage at one of the legendary poolside cabanas. Afterward, dine on spa cuisine while basking in the sun and imagining past visitors like Raquel Welch and the Beatles relishing the surroundings. Head inside for walls of candlelight and soft music. La Prairie's treatments are based on the Swedish science of antiaging, but keep the feeling of luxury rather than biology flowing with the Caviar Firming Facial, in which the nutrients from caviar extracts, AHAs, and unique sea proteins will send you on your way looking like a screen siren.

When your day of bliss has regrettably come to an end, you'll realize the time you've spent on yourself has been a necessity rather than an indulgence. You are not only revamped and recharged but ready for your close-up, board meeting, or PTA fund-raiser.



THE WELL

Luxury Spa at Miramonte Resort

Hundreds of years ago, native people discovered a natural well in the California desert. Since that time, generations of travelers have returned to this area for rest, relaxation and essential rejuvenation. Now we gather again to find healing at The WELLSM, a new destination spa at Miramonte Resort & Spa. The WELLSM provides an intimate, Tuscan-style setting where our signature services focus on healing the body and soul in unison, creating the ultimate spa experience.

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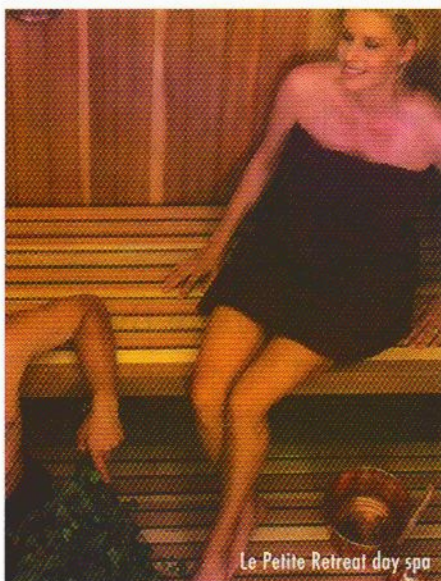
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Le Petite Retreat day spa

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