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PASSPORT

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STOCKHOLM

IN THE VIP LOUNGE
JOHN WATERS

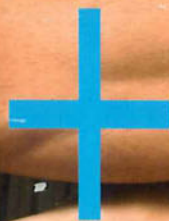
DISCOVERING THE
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OCTOBER 2010
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THE MOST SENSATIONAL

SPAS IN THE WORLD

IN SEARCH OF
THE MOST SENSATIONAL
SPAS
IN THE WORLD

Travelers know better than most that a spa trip isn't just a luxury, but a necessity. Whether you take a daycation or spend an entire week, new and ancient spa techniques can have powerful effects on your body, mind, and spirit. As more and more incredible spas emerge around the world, *PASSPORT* continues to leave no hot stone unturned, or therapy untried, to bring you the best body treatments on the planet. Whether you want to take a polar plunge, get a fish mani-pedi, or realign your chakras, this year's selection of spas that span six continents is sure to contain a treatment that is perfect for you.



your room). The Revitalizing Ritual (80 min/\$200) will have you wrapped, scrubbed, and buffed with yuzu mimosa sea algae, ohana ginger grass, and cherry blossom rice. The candle-lit Euphoria Ritual (100 min/\$270) starts with your face swaddled in sage-scented towels, followed by an aromatherapy scalp massage, warm botanical body mask, a gentle buffing, then immersion in a soaking tub, and finally an herb-infused massage. Ahhh....Sure, there's body/mind soothing, too (Qigong, tai chi, Yamuna body rolling). When was the last time your fave spa included astrology, tarot card readings, handwriting analysis, or "soul catching?" Men can expect a gentlemen's menu of services and—given that most guests are female—lots and lots of personalized attention. Like most spas, Canyon Ranch wants the guys to come back, and bring friends. www.canyonranchlenox.com

—Joseph V. Amodio

THE SPA AT ARIA LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

In Vegas, sometimes bigger is just bigger, but in the case of the recently opened 80,000-square-foot spa at the Aria Casino Hotel, bigger is indeed better. With 62 treatment rooms, a full-service salon, a 16,000-square-foot advanced fitness center, boutique, fire lounge, poolside spa cabanas, and the first co-ed spa balcony in Las Vegas history, **The Spa at Aria** is a goliath in a city where size absolutely matters. As you enter this desert retreat, massive floor-to-ceiling windows magnify the sense of spaciousness. Once inside, Japanese influences abound, including a stone and water garden adorned with sacred Japanese Aji stones, blessed in Japan, to inspire calmness and tranquility upon arrival. Though a wide range of massages is on offer at the Aria, the standouts are the ones steeped in Asian traditions, like the Thai Poulitice Massage (50 min/\$180) where the century's old Thai tradition of using heated muslin parcels infused with lemongrass, ginger, and prai extract, is combined with a warm oil massage to create a transcendent experience. Of the mix, the Ashiatsu massage (50 min/\$180), which blends Shiatsu and Swedish techniques for pressure lovers, is perhaps the most unique experience on the menu. Other highlights include the Shio Salt Room where salt-infused air commingles with a wall of illuminated salt bricks and salt lamps to create an environment that promotes the healing of skin irritations and upper respiratory problems. There is also the Ganbanyoku Stone Bed Room—the only one of its kind in the US—which promises all manner of holistic benefits ranging from improved blood circulation to increased metabolism. During the Ganbanyoku treatment, negative ions and far-infrared rays are emitted as you relax on a bed of heated black stone that soothes muscles and almost mystically dispatches aches and pains from the body. No matter what you believe, there is indeed something spiritual about the experience. www.arialasvegas.com/spa

—Duane Wells

SPA AT ENCANTADO SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Tucked into the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains just outside Santa Fe, I recently discovered New Mexico's only AAA Five Diamond resort. Surrounded by endless protected lands, spacious pueblo-style casitas and suites dot the landscape at Encantado, each commanding impressive views across the Rio Grande Valley to the distant Jemez Mountains. As impressed as I was with the service, amenities, delectable food, and stunning views, the spa facility truly captured my heart. Guests to **The Spa at Encantado** are encouraged to begin their experience with a complimentary Purification Ritual, utilizing the spa's luxurious amenities. A hot outdoor soak and relaxing steam in the men's Kiva sauna left me melting into my therapist's arms. Guiding me from the relaxation area, past a labyrinth, he led me down a breezeway to a small casita, with a private patio area with an outdoor tub. Here I would receive a signature 90-minute treatment, the Shiro Abhyanga (\$245). The treatment began with a gentle stream of warm herbal oil to my forehead, said to quiet the "third eye," followed by special attention to the neck, shoulders, and scalp. The

treatment continued with a lengthy massage, utilizing therapeutic herbal oils said to help dissolve toxins, and calm the nervous system, while stimulating the circulation and lymphatic systems. Unwilling to let the blissful experience end, I went back for another round of purification before retiring to my casita for a crisp afternoon nap on my private patio, bundled in my robe with a fire nearby. Five Diamond, indeed. www.encantadoresort.com

—Joseph Schmitt

VINOTHERAPIE SPA BY CAUDALIE, PLAZA HOTEL NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The biggest blunder for Ann Hathaway and Kate Hudson was picking the same wedding date at the Plaza hotel in *Bridal Wars*. Second mistake? Not booking a treatment at the iconic hotel's **Vinotherapie Spa by Caudalie**. It's so posh, it has its own elevator. When you enter the spa, you're greeted by a handsome staff, helping you get outfitted in the changing area (nothing like Caudalie bath products to get you amped up). You then head to the 800-square-foot French Paradox Wine Lounge where the on-site wine sommelier, Cliff Rames, will help you choose from a variety of the founder's estate wine (Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte) for a glass to sip while you wait for your treatment (you can also enjoy it post-treatment). Obviously, grapes and wine inspire all aspects of the spa, including the treatments, like the signature Crushed Cabernet Scrub (35 min/\$150). I was slathered in grape seeds, honey, brown sugar, and essential oils for a truly amazing and unique scrub (not to mention it got me a little hungry with the fusion of delicious scents). Got two hours to kill? The Premier Cru Facial (2 hours/\$350) is pretty extravagant, inspired by the Premier Cru wines of France. I indulged in a neck, shoulder, and scalp massage, cleansing, toning, and exfoliation of face, then a moisturizing mask, followed by warm thermal mask (helps lock in moisture and optimize absorption of ingredients), hand and feet massage, and ended with the application of the Caudalie Premier Cru Cream. The facial involves more than fifteen Caudalie products, all featuring grape in some form (grape seed oil, grape extract, grape water, Resveratrol, grape seed polyphenols, etc). Quite decadent, but what else would you expect from the Plaza? www.theplaza.com

—Jimmy Im

TRIBECA SPA OF TRANQUILITY NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The Tribeca Spa of Tranquility, near SoHo, was once Blondie's recording studio, but today it is better known by spa aficionados as the place that offers an authentic straight-outta-Seoul, Korean body scrub (90 min/\$129). The treatment is as simple as the spa's décor, and few come here to lounge around for the day. You begin with a few minutes in the steam room to soften up the skin then head to a stark room where a therapist dons a plastic apron and instructs you to lie on the table. What happens next is almost akin to water torture, with gallons upon gallons of hot water repeatedly doused on your body. No cutesy body wash here, these tiny women use only a small sponge and elbow grease and manage to remove so much dead skin from your body, you'll find yourself reassuring them (and yourself) that you do indeed shower daily. They'll just nod and laugh quietly as they've heard it all before. After an hour, you're treated to a 30-minute mini-massage with skin softening seaweed lotion, hair shampoo, conditioning, and cucumber eye treatment. A range of other treatments from facials to the standard mani/pedis are also on offer, but the second bestseller here is the Ionithermie Detox (60 min/\$200), a cellulite toning and purifying body wrap that is popular with those who need to drop a few inches of fat in a hurry. It involves a mind-boggling application of Afina, natural diuretic oil, then lying atop a mattress covered with algae-enriched clay and electrodes. It's not pretty, but one can eliminate up to eight inches of fat. Who can get mad at that? www.tribecaspaoftranquility.com

—Chanize Thorpe