



Hydrotherapy at the Excellence Playa Mujeres

You...Only Better

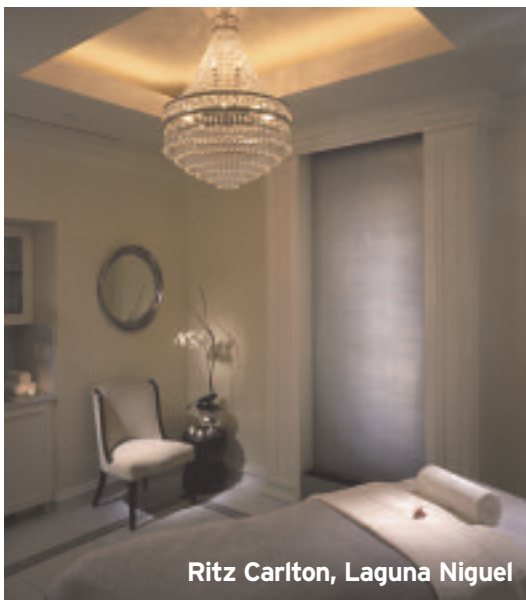
OUR ANNUAL SPA ROUND-UP PROVIDES YOU WITH
THE BEST PLACES FOR PAMPERING, BOTH NEAR AND FAR



Ritz Carlton, Laguna Niguel



RockResorts Spa, The Landings St. Lucia



Ritz Carlton, Laguna Niguel

HOW DO I LOVE ME? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS... a facial, a full body exfoliation, a manicure and a pedicure, yoga, good food, and a bit of libation too! Yeah, that's the love I'm trying to feel this summer!

Listed geographically are the hot spots where you can feel it too—any way you like—to create a whole new you.

Close Calls

Aqua Star Spa / The Beverly Hilton Beverly Hills, CA

It is the quintessential haven for all who desire the old school glamour of Hollywood revived to modern day standards, the centerpiece of which is a gorgeous deep pool smack dab in the middle, where massages can be given by day and classic movies are shown (on the big wall above) by night.

The charmingly intimate Aqua Star Spa, where even the steam room is personalized, features signature treatments using Sonya Dakar products. The \$200 Grande Dame facial especially offers amazing results. After an assessment of your skin the esthetician is charged with the task to cleanse, exfoliate, and regenerate the face, neck, and hands.

Gaze into your eyes for a few minutes after this 80-minute treatment then head back outdoors to experience a poolside dinner of sushi and steak from Circa 55, with a signature Mai Tai from the originators at Trader Vic Lounge. www.beverlyhilton.com; 310/274-7777

The Spa / Ritz Carlton Laguna Niguel, CA

Fascinated by playful dolphins, morning surfers, and/or the Pacific Ocean in general? If so there's a Club Level room or suite (where they offer six food presentations daily) at the Ritz that can't be beat in SoCal!

Perched on a bluff directly above the sea, the once-classic interior has brought into the new millennium a look that elegantly whispers modern day fabulous at every turn.

Signature dining at Restaurant 162' (you guessed it, 162 feet above the sea) is decadent, as are wine, cheese, and chocolate in a festive atmosphere they call Eno.

In the \$318, 90-minute Collagen Infusion facial, the face is drenched in luscious nutrients that deeply penetrate the epidermis resulting in an immediate, perceptible difference. Fine lines, if you have any, are gone!

And, if by chance you're in search of that draw-drop-

ping location for your upcoming wedding—you know, the one you hope will make your friends call you the "B" word because you're that fabulous—the bluff-side gazebo here is the place!

www.ritzcarlton.com; 949/240-2000

Skin Deep: The Body Spa Huntington Beach, CA.

A deep state of mental and physical relaxation is the result of the five-stage Zen Water Experience, where the first step begins with a warm rain shower. A self-applied exfoliant rids you of outside debris. In the next room you'll apply warm mud and enter the steam room for detoxification, followed by a shower prior to entering the mineral rich bath. At \$45 for the 60-minute treatment, or \$25 as an add-on to any service, this is day spa bliss!

www.eskindeep.com; 714/841-3313

South Side Blue Med Spa Atlanta, GA

Of noteworthy mention in the extremely gay friendly midtown section of the Southern mecca is this tranquil day spa featuring microdermabrasion for the feet (\$165) and hands. In addition to a full array of spa services, they offer the revolutionary SmartLipo procedure. This amazing, new FDA cleared customized treatment boasts minimal downtime with permanent fat cell removal from the treated area—unlike other treatments where a year later the patient is fat in that same area once again. Days afterwards you're back on the set, at the desk, or wherever you go to make the big bucks.

www.bluedmedspa.com; 404/815-8880

By the Sea RockResorts Spa / The Landings St. Lucia The West Indies

Positioned along the warm turquoise waters of Rodney Bay on the Caribbean Sea, this 62-villa property (one, two, and three bedrooms) opened in December of 2007,

BY MICHAEL ANDRE ADAMS

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with development expected to continue through 2010 (think 19 acres eventually laying claim to 231 waterfront residences). In the here and now, colorful Caribbean flowers help to camouflage the construction for which the resort has made generous compensations in terms of introductory pricing with 50% discounts in the spa.

Speaking of which, I can honestly say their spa is one of the best spa experiences you can hope to have. The therapists are well-trained; in fact, once I was situated on the table the first thing the esthetician did was wash her hands, which for some reason seems rare these days. Add to that the use of skin care products from Epicuren and you can't lose!

The list of signature treatments includes La Soufreiere & Lime (\$210), combining a detoxifying volcanic mud wrap with acupressure, Thai, and Lomi Lomi techniques followed by Epicuren's amazingly moist skin conditioner.

www.rockresorts.com; 877/657-ROCK

Across the Beautiful Border

El Cocay Spa / El Cid Resorts

Rivera Maya, Mexico

The beating drum seeks permission from the spirit world for you to re-enter the womb (sweat lodge). Inside, herb-infused liquids brewed up by your personal shaman are then poured over heated volcanic rocks to create steam to stimulate circulation. As you chant throughout the journey to forgive and release self and all others the perfect will of God is able to then inhabit, according to ancient Mayan practices. At the conclusion of the Temazcal Sacred Bath Treatment you exit the womb reborn and anew. It is an awesome experience!

The all-inclusive resort offers numerous activities ranging from bike riding through the local village-like community, day trips to nearby ancient ruins and numerous archaeological sites, anytime jaunts to nearby Playa del Carmen for shopping, and more. The resort has a yacht for local day trips (such as snorkeling) as well. If you're looking for value and beauty, this is it!

www.elcid.com; 888/823-0099

Miile Spa / Excellence Playa Mujeres

Cancun, Mexico

Hands down, Excellence Playa Mujeres is the most tasteful, luxurious, beachfront, all-inclusive adult resorts to open in 2007!

In addition to the contemporary glamour, its five restaurants (Mexican, French, Italian, Asian, lobster house, steak house, and tapas bar) and theater with oversized individual chairs and enormous bar add club-level accommodations with bathroom amenities by Bulgari and a minibar stocked daily with good liquor!

Excellence defines SPA as "Salute Per Aqua." This lesson in marine wellness features an all-encompassing and enormous pool of hydrotherapy with a central waterfall, swan and cascade jets, high-pressure water hoses, bubble massage beds, a sensations shower, a tropical rain-shower, foot bath rituals, an ice bath suite, hot- and ice-water plunge pool, and Caldarium. The one-hour circuit allows you to work directly with salt water in aqua exercises, massages with jets, and cascades, which contrast with the iced pool and make the perfect preamble to the *hammam*, an Arab-style steam bath. Invigorating!

www.excellence-resorts.com; 866/540-2585

Throughout Europe

[Comfort Zone] Space / Lisloughrey Lodge

County Mayo, Ireland

Red walls and rich velvet textures evoke a warm, passionate sensation from the moment you step foot inside this lakefront country-chic resort. The treatment of treatments is the \$180 Body Strategist Cellulite Refiner, a heat-freezing treatment designed to rid the body of toxic cellulite in the most stubborn areas while contouring and firming at the same time. The principle product—which can be purchased in the U.S.—comes from Comfort Zone and incorporates ingredients such as caffeine for drainage, other marine-based ingredients for detoxification, and more to give the skin a more compact and elastic appearance.

www.lisloughreylodge.ie; 011 353 94 9545 400

Wine Spa / Hotel Peralada

Girona, Spain

Girona's Tramontana winds and oceanic breezes—once enjoyed by such hot shots as the great Salvador Dalí—produce great grapes to drink and crush for use in the Merlot and Muscat Wine Baths (\$70/25 mins). While there consider the Ampelotherapy (grape- and wine-based face and body treatments), a group practice within the resorts plentiful hydrotherapy facilities. Great circulation and nutrition to the skin and spirit are the principle benefits.

www.golfperalada.com; 011 972 53 88 30