

features

a closer look at some of the spas that are making news in the industry both here and abroad.

108 PACIFIC COAST HIDEAWAY

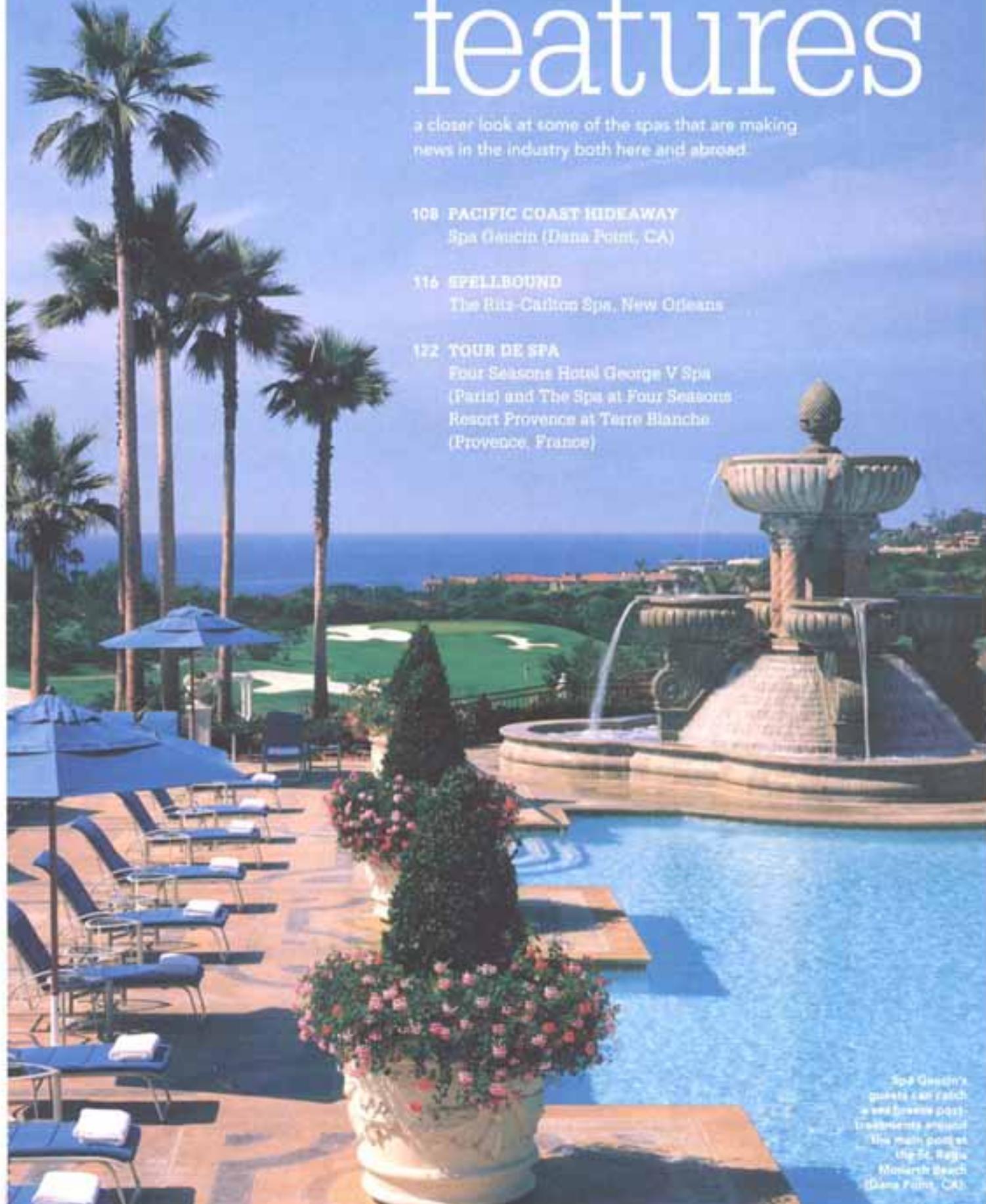
Spa Quesin (Dana Point, CA)

116 SPELLBOUND

The Ritz-Carlton Spa, New Orleans

122 TOUR DE SPA

Four Seasons Hotel George V Spa (Paris) and The Spa at Four Seasons Resort Provence at Terre Blanche (Provence, France)



Spa Quesin's quiet oasis offers sea-breeze (page 108) treatments around the main pool at the St. Regis Monarch Beach (Dana Point, CA).



Hideaway

This O.C. gem invites guests to luxuriate and unwind by the sea with California-style care.

WRITTEN BY CRISTINA DE OLIVEIRA



Le

here is more to Orange County than what is seen on television. Pop culture has painted a picture of Southern California that is teeming with blondes, Bentleys, Botox, and brats. In reality, what welcomes visitors is a stylish and sophisticated seaside paradise that lends itself to lavish getaways.

Perched high on a bluff that spills into the ocean, the St. Regis Resort Monarch Beach (Dana Point, CA) is a mission-style oasis that is built into the hill and invites guests to enjoy supreme relaxation in a beautiful setting. When not hitting the links or lounging poolside, guests flock to the property's **Spa Gaucin**, another one of the spoils of California's only five-star, five-diamond resort.

Named after a mountaintop village in Southern Spain that is known for its breathtaking views of Gibraltar and Morocco, the spa honors its namesake by offering a Mediterranean-inspired menu. Launched in February, the revamped menu features indulging treatments such as the nourishing Olive Stone Scrub (\$175, 60 minutes), which incorporates lavender, juniper, olive leaf, and rosemary; and the detoxifying Devine Grape Seed Mud Wrap (\$175, 60 minutes), which uses clay mixed with grapeseeds to absorb impurities. Couples can enjoy the Wine Escape (\$635, 2 hours), which invites them to enjoy a fruit and cheese plate with California white wine while soaking in an Anti-Oxidant Wine Bath par deux. A 90-minute Couple's Therapeutic Massage with natural grapeseed oil ends the treatment on a sweet note.

These services, in addition to a host of others, are part of the updated menu. Spa director Valory Reed chose to overhaul the offerings in order to maintain a superior level of service

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The mission-style
property is the only
five-star, five-diamond
resort in California.



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for her discerning clientele. "Our typical clients are quite spa savvy, so they are looking for an experience they can't get elsewhere," she says. To complement the menu's makeover, the spa also introduced several product lines, including Being TRUE, Innovative Body Science, Kate Somerville, Le Vin, and Olavie. "I wanted to ensure that our menu choices were fresh and rewarding for our guests," says Reed.

The partnership between the spa and esthetician-to-the-stars Kate Somerville has led to many glowing reviews and complexions. One of the spa's most popular treatments is the Customized Kate Facial (\$175, 60 minutes; \$260, 90 minutes), which provides guests with the personal touch needed to achieve flawless skin. Along with using Kate Somerville signature products, estheticians employ a Clarisonic Skin Care Brush for deep cleaning and end the facial with an application of Being TRUE's mineral makeup.

The decision to add Kate Somerville to the roster was a personal one for Reed, who had been following the skincare regime herself before introducing the line to the spa. "My skin weathered my second pregnancy beautifully, and I owe that to Kate," she says. "I truly fell in love with the products and wanted to share this success with our St. Regis guests." It is this type of quality control that keeps the 30,000-square-foot spa buzzing with almost 300 guests per day.

The warm and welcoming ambience is another reason the treatment rooms regularly reach capacity. To set the tone for ultimate relaxation, guests are asked to leave their worries at the door, literally, by tossing a coin into The Well of Desires. They are then led to the well-stocked men's or women's changing areas, both featuring whirlpools and herbal saunas. The spa's 25 treatment rooms include two deluxe hydrotherapy



A host of seaside fitness classes make the most of the resort's setting.

rooms featuring private lanais and three couples' suites set up with a whirlpool, a couples' steam shower, and a marble fireplace. Many rooms are also outfitted with windows that are perfectly draped to allow just the right amount of natural light to trickle in, reminding guests of their surroundings.

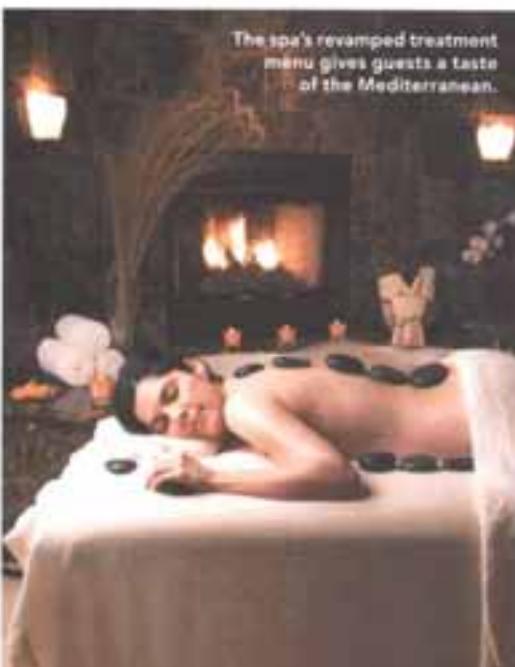
The pampering does not end when the treatments do, as guests are encouraged to bask in their post-service glow in the spa's Tranquility Lounge with a complimentary glass of organic wine or champagne. Decked out with plush Kashwere furnishings, a marble fireplace, and chapel windows, the lounge is set up so that guests never want to leave. "Guests do 'ooh' and 'ahhh' when entering the lounge," says Reed. "Some say it is the living or reading room they'd like to have in their home." To tantalize even more of the senses, fountains are positioned throughout the spa allowing the soothing sound of cascading water to wash over guests. According to Reed, clients definitely notice this touch and comment on its calming effect.

If guests are interested in listening to the ocean itself post-treatment, they can lounge by the spa's three-lane lap pool or take a dip to enjoy the sounds of underwater music. After satisfying their cravings for relaxation, spa-goers can also sate their appetites with healthy and flavorful dishes at the adjacent Spa Gaucin Café, which opened this summer.

"The Café was developed because we want to focus on total wellness and have our clients feel great from the inside out," says Reed. Overseen by the resort's executive chef Frederic Castan, the café offers a Mediterranean-inspired menu featuring healthy cuisine with a decidedly California flair. The menu was developed after months of "test driving" spa cuisine on in-room dining menus. "We were rewarded with thankful guest comments about enjoying fresh, tasty fare that is good for you and provides energy for a Southern California day," says Reed.

It's not all about kicking back at Spa Gaucin, where spa-goers are given plenty of options for expending their energy. Guests are encouraged to visit the fitness

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The spa's revamped treatment menu gives guests a taste of the Mediterranean.

Many of the cozy treatment rooms offer a fireplace, a steam shower, and a view of the outdoors.



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center and to participate in the daily activities offered through the spa. While there are options such as Yoga-Lates Remix and Belly Jam that keep guests indoors, there are plenty of classes that get sand beneath their toes. The revolving program, which features the Pacific Ocean as its backdrop, regularly offers classes such as 6:30 A.M. Sunrise Beach Walks, Cardio Beach Boot Camp, and Shoreline Abs.

This focus on fitness is just another component in the spa's mission to help guests achieve overall wellness. To amplify this approach to healthy living, the spa recently introduced the Vitale Health and Wellness Center, which allows Spa Gaucin to nurture every aspect of a person's health—physical, emotional, and mental. According to Reed, this new addition addresses the fact that spas are no longer just a pampering choice, but are also an integrated part of people's lives.

Headed by Ali Rafatjoo, M.D., Vitale offers a holistic wellness program focused on maintaining and improving health through preventative medicine and modern technology. Rafatjoo's engaging and energetic personality puts guests at ease as he takes

an old-fashioned family doctor approach during his consultation. As of now, Vitale functions within Spa Gaucin each Monday, taking up two to three treatment rooms, and the number of doctors varies as each visit is customized to the guest's needs. For \$2,990, guests are subject to a battery of head-to-toe tests, which include a full physical, a psycho-social assessment, a genetic disease risk assessment, a hearing evaluation, a full skin evaluation, and even complete blood tests. This one-day Comprehensive Examination and Testing Package also allows clients to meet with a registered dietitian, receive personalized vitamins and supplements, and enjoy a catered breakfast and lunch prepared by the executive chef. To complement the program, the hotel offers a Health & Wellness package (starting at \$600 per night) that provides a healthy breakfast, two 75-minute Intuitive Massages at Spa Gaucin, and a \$250 discount per person on the Vitale testing package.

Forward-thinking programs such as this attract visitors, who make up 70 percent of the clientele, and locals alike to Spa Gaucin. Area residents are offered resort memberships, which give them access to the

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Both the men's and women's locker rooms feature a whirlpool, a steam room, and a sauna.

Guests begin their spa experience by tossing a coin into The Well of Desire, which signifies leaving their worries at the door.



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fitness center and discounts throughout the hotel. Due to the loyal clientele, the spa is regularly filled with familiar faces. "We have families that enjoy the summertime or the holidays at the St. Regis and many that spa daily during their stay," says Reed. "One special family enjoys four days of spa-ing around Christmas, and the guests range in age from 13 to 92."

Reed has complete trust in her staff of 65—whom she describes as talented, passionate, and fun—because they go above and beyond to nurture guests' experiences. "We operate as a family. We deeply care for one another and take care of each other," she says. "Part of the spa's mission statement is to celebrate our associates, who in turn share that joy with our guests." The result of this trickle-down method of achieving customer satisfaction is positive feedback. "Daily, I receive a note of appreciation because an associate exceeded a guest's expectations," says Reed.

Another aspect of the spa that receives rave reviews is the Spa Boutique. Reed places much importance on selecting the stock because she believes that retail

provides the at-home connection with Spa Gaucin. While skincare products fly off of the shelves, resort wear is also a big seller. "We want a guest to have a hard time choosing what they want because they love so many items," says Reed. "Our selection covers a spectrum of culture and interests and ranges from Badgley Mischka sunglasses to organic lip balm to coffee table books about wine."

Although Spa Gaucin has many recent additions, Reed doesn't foresee any slowing down. "We want to continue growing with our clients as their needs and lives change, and we want to be their resource to celebrate love, life, and wellness," she says. While Reed works tirelessly to ensure that clients are raving about the spa, she is having a good time doing so. "I love all of it," she says. "I get the best of all worlds in one—cream of the crop associates; fun and engaging clients; a five-star, five-diamond resort; and all in beautiful Southern California." With such a satisfied staff in place, it is no wonder that this beauty by the sea continues to be a welcoming haven for guests to kick back and enjoy the SoCal sunshine. ■

SPA GAUCIN

Dana Point, CA
owner: Starwood
spa director: Valerie Reed
opened: August 2001

CLIENT BASE

70% female
30% male

SPACE

30,000 square feet;
25 treatment rooms

OFFERINGS

- aromatherapy
- body treatments
- couples' treatments
- energy work
- facials
- fitness
- hair and scalp treatments
- hand and foot treatments
- hydrotherapy
- massage
- nailcare
- naturopathic medicine
- nutrition consultation
- Pilates
- prenatal services
- reflexology
- sauna services
- spa pool
- waxing
- yoga

SIGNATURE SERVICE

Mediterranean Massage
(\$175, 60 minutes;
\$260, 90 minutes)

MOST EXPENSIVE OFFERING

Bridal Boot Camp (\$1,100)
includes five 60-minute personal training sessions and two 60-minute spa services

PRODUCT LINES:

- Being TRUE
- Innovative Body Science
- Kate Somerville
- Le-Vit
- Napa Valley Spa Products
- Omnia

EQUIPMENT

- Cybex
- Oakworks
- SpasSoft
- Zentale

SPA CONSULTANT

Sylvia Sapielli, SPAd
(Sedona, AZ)

ARCHITECT

Holmes and Narver
(Orange, CA)

INTERIOR DESIGN

Hirsch Bedner Associates
(Santa Monica, CA)



spellbound

Relaxation seekers are bewitched by the locally inspired services offered at this newly renovated

New Orleans spa. Written by Julie Keller

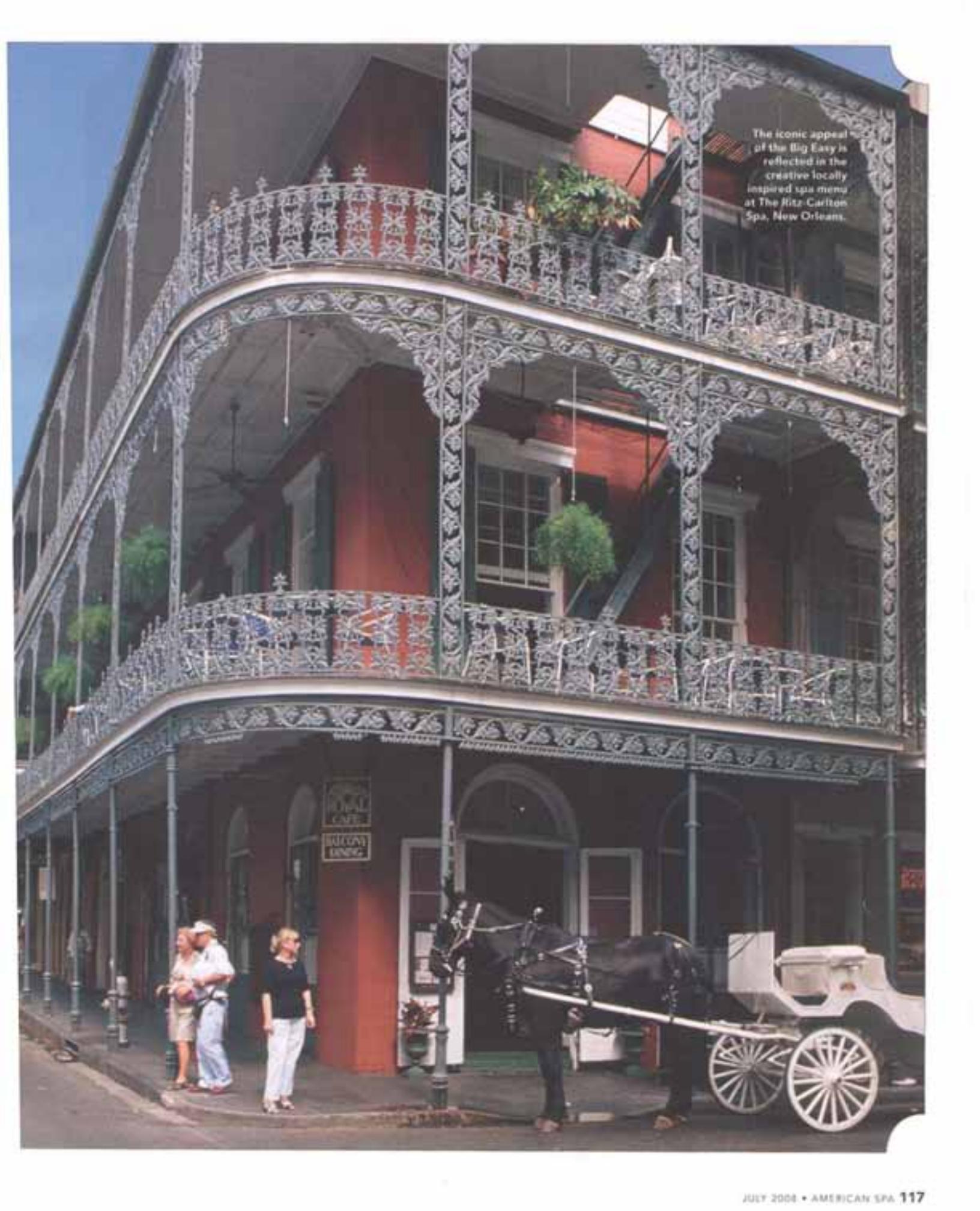


IN THE EARLY 1800s, THE MYSTERIOUS Marie Laveau garnered acclaim in the city of New Orleans for her magical voodoo practices, curing the ails of wealthy patrons, casting spells, and instilling fear in the hearts of superstitious locals. Since her death, she's been raised to icon status, gracing countless pages of fiction and non-fiction books as the Voodoo Queen, serving as the subject of several songs, and going down in history as one of the city's most memorable citizens. She's also the inspiration for the Marie Laveau Voodoo Love Massage (\$150, 70 minutes) at **The Ritz-Carlton Spa, New Orleans**. The treatment, which includes a soak in a fragrant bath and a Swedish massage set to local voodoo chanting and flickering red candles, incorporates an oil said to emulate one of Laveau's famed love potions. It is also one of the newly renovated spa's

signature sessions and a sample of the myriad services that are inspired by the bounty of this magical, mysterious city. "This treatment gets a lot of attention due to the unique aspects of the service," says spa manager Daisye Dykes. "Voodoo is part of the history of New Orleans, and this service offers a bit of history and an interesting story to our guests, who are here to experience the city."

Several other treatments on the menu also take inspiration from the Big Easy and its environs. Café du Monde, a longtime New Orleans outdoor dining institution known for its beignets and café au lait, has tourists and locals alike lining up around the block from morning to night to partake in the scrumptious sweets. As such, The Ritz-Carlton Spa offers a number of signature sessions inspired by the coffee using

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The iconic appeal of the Big Easy is reflected in the creative locally inspired spa menu at The Ritz-Carlton Spa, New Orleans.

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BodyCoffee products that are infused with coffee, milk, salts, and essential oils. Highlights include the Café Au Lait Massage (\$125, 50 minutes; \$180, 75 minutes), the Café Au Lait Body Polish (\$145, 50 minutes), and the Café Au Lait Detoxifying Treatment (\$165, 50 minutes). The fragrant magnolia trees that line the antebellum streets of the Garden District also make their way onto the menu via the Essence of Magnolia Massage (\$150, 70 minutes) and the Magnolia Sugar Scrub (\$125, 50 minutes). Several other exfoliating and hydrating services are ideal for guests who have stayed up late and are looking to detox or travelers hoping to ease the skin-sapping ails of flight. "Many of our guests are here to enjoy the city, and they look to us for detoxification and to relax before or after a night out on the town," says Dykes.

But this influx of travelers looking to enjoy this longtime party city that is home to Mardi Gras and Jazz Fest is relatively new, as the entire region has been in recovery mode for the past few years following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The spa closed its doors for 15 months following the storm to repair the damage, but the hotel decided to find the silver lining in the situation and made property-wide improvements, including updates to the 25,000-square-foot, 22-treatment-room spa. "We took this time to not only rebuild but to also make some renovations and add space to our spa," says Dykes. The spa menu was also updated and features both treatment favorites from before the hurricane, such as the ever-popular Relaxing Swedish Massage (\$110, 50 minutes; \$165, 80 minutes), as well as some new services that are unique to the area, such as the Warm Stone Vichy Massage (\$150, 50 minutes). "This is a massage in which the therapist combines the muscle-easing strokes of a warm stone massage under seven showerheads continuously cascading over the guest while promoting detoxification," adds Dykes. "This treatment is the best of both worlds." It appears the spa and menu updates are making an impact, as according to Dykes, numbers are now at pre-Katrina heights, and the spa is consistently nearing its maximum capacity of 400-plus guests per day during weekends and other high-traffic times of the year.

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FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: A candlelit hydrotherapy soak is part of the Marie Laveau Voodoo Love Massage; the women's relaxation room is an ideal site for groups to convene in the spa; the hotel's verdant courtyard is perfect for pre- and post-treatment relaxation.

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Still, the hurricane, which was one of the five deadliest and costliest storms in U.S. history, took its toll on the property—and the spa. "The challenging part is that many service industry employees as well as massage therapists, stylists, and nail technicians have moved away," says Dykes. "In addition, our local clientele has different spending habits now. Due to the storm, many locals are still focusing on rebuilding their homes and communities and are not able to spend money on items and services for themselves."

To address these challenges, the hotel has been hosting job fairs, and the spa team is reaching out to local schools in an effort to find talented therapists, estheticians, and other technicians to add to a growing roster of 50-plus staff members. And to encourage the return of local guests, a 20-percent discount for Louisiana natives is in place Monday through Thursday. "The majority of our business does come from the hotel, but we do have a very loyal group of locals who visit our spa frequently," says Dykes.

One part of the spa that seems to inspire loyalty, in both locals and hotel guests, is the retail

area, which Vera Bibb, assistant director of spa, says makes up a huge percentage of the spa's sales. While homecare products are a popular purchase, Dykes says it is the spa's other unique offerings that keep clients coming back. A home linen line from the makers of the spa linens, lingerie, clothing, and holiday-themed items as well as gifts for men, women, children, and pets selected by retail manager Christy Rantz are among the options available. "She brought in some creative and unique lines that our guests really enjoy," says Dykes. In the future, trunk shows scheduled around special events will be offered in the spa's retail area, as well.

Also on tap is yet another update. The spa team plans to devote a section of the menu to eco-friendly services. "The plan is to make a treatment room completely green—paint, linens, and products used will all be safe for the earth," says Dykes. "We will offer organic manicures and pedicures, facials, and body treatments. This project is currently underway, and we feel it will be welcomed with open arms by our guests." And it's just one more way The Ritz-Carlton Spa, New Orleans will help its clients achieve Big Easy bliss. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The hotel is located in the French Quarter; a fountain and retail area greet guests upon arrival; luxe nailcare services round out the spa menu.

THE RITZ-CARLTON SPA, NEW ORLEANS (New Orleans)

www.RitzCarlton.com; Vera Bibb

Manager: Dynyn Dykes

Open: November 2000

Reopened: April 2007

CLIENT BASE:

75% female, 25% male

SPACE:

20,000 square feet;

22 treatment rooms

OFFERINGS:

Aromatherapy, body treatments, couples

treatments, eyelash and brow tinting, facials, fitness, hair and scalp treatments, hand and foot treatments, hydrotherapy, makeup application, massage, microdermabrasion, nailcare, prenatal services, spa cake, sunless tanning, waxing

SIGNATURE SERVICE:

Maria Laveau's Voodoo Love Massage (\$150, 70 minutes)

MOST EXPENSIVE OFFERING:

Bridal Bliss (\$725, 6 hours), a pre-wedding experience that includes an Aroma Golden Body Ritual, a Deluxe Manicure and Pedicure, makeup application, and hairstyling

PRODUCT LINES:

BodyCoffee

Elizabeth W

Kneipp

Mama Mio

MD Skincare

Payot Paris

Prada

EQUIPMENT:

Cyber

Life Fitness

Oakworks

SpaGuru

SpaSoft

Ty-Robes

Zendala

EXTERIOR DESIGNER:

Lumabience
(Metairie, LA)



Guests at the legendary Four Seasons Hotel George V have Paris at their feet, thanks to its prime location in the heart of the city.

Four de spa

Paris and Provence serve as the inspired settings for two impressive spas that will have spa-goers cheering. "Vive la France."

WRITTEN BY HEATHER MIKESELL

Although much is made of the love-hate relationship Americans have with all things French, there is no denying that France often tops the must-visit list of many U.S. travelers. The country never fails to charm with its engaging sidewalk cafés, historic treasures, captivating culture, and sensational sense of style. Known for its numerous beauty brands, France is no stranger to lavish spas and decadent skincare treatments. Thanks to two Four Seasons spas—each embracing its celebrated locale—the country can claim even more bragging rights.

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The elegant sitting area, which overlooks the pool, features a classic Louis XVI-style decor with its marble columns, decorative fireplace, and crystal chandelier.



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Spa-ing in Paris

Located just off the Champs-Elysées, the Four Seasons Hotel George V (Paris) offers the ultimate in unadulterated luxury. Opened in 1928, the original George V raised the bar in the hospitality industry with numerous innovations, such as a telephone in each guest room with both an inside and outside line and a dumb waiter system to expedite food service. Not surprisingly, the hotel attracted an influential clientele. In fact, it became General Eisenhower's headquarters during the liberation of Paris in 1944. He later returned while president of the U.S., as did other heads of states, including Jimmy Carter, Richard Nixon, and François Mitterrand.

Today, the hotel is managed by Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts thanks to a long-term agreement signed in November 1997. As part of that agreement, the hotel incorporated the Four Seasons name and underwent a \$125-million renovation project. Intended to recapture the hotel's original style and grandeur, the renovation also included the addition of a full-service spa. Opened in December 1999, the **Four Seasons Hotel George V Spa** features a classic Louis XVI style. According to spa director Verena Fox, the spa's French interior design sets it apart from other local spas. It is also one of the few spas in Paris to feature an indoor pool. Upon entering the spa lobby, guests are treated to a view of the pool and its frescoes, depicting the gardens of Versailles.



The relaxation lounge serves as a tranquil place to indulge in a post-treatment drink and snack.



Guests can appreciate the spa's frescoes, which depict the gardens of Versailles, while soaking in the pool or Jacuzzi.



Courting France's rich past, the spa relies on historical figures and places as a source of inspiration for its treatment menu. Marie Antoinette and her beauty secrets, for example, inspired *A Stroll Through Versailles* (\$514, 2 hours 30 minutes), which honors her favorite scent: orange blossoms. The package involves a steamed orange blossom body scrub, a relaxing massage with warm shea butter, and a milky facial. According to Fox, it is the spa's most popular offering. Spa-goers can also opt to indulge in the package's treatments individually. Each concludes with a serving of delicious pink pastries.

This past holiday season, the spa introduced the *24 Karat* (\$748, 2 hours) package, which draws on the restorative powers of gold. Using this precious metal in its many incarnations, the package features a 60-minute four-handed face and body treatment using massage oil that is mixed with particles of gold and three thin sheets of 24-karat gold that are massaged into the face. Spa-goers are then treated to a moisturizing hair treatment, followed by a blow-dry. The package is wrapped up with a serving of green tea packaged in 24-karat gold leaves from the French teahouse Mariage Frères and a homemade macaroon topped with gold shavings.

According to Fox, the menu is designed to feature an international flavor with local influences. As a result, Carita and Decléor, both France-based brands, were selected as the product lines of choice. The spa is also the only one in France using Sodashi, an organic skincare line from Australia. "Sodashi was chosen because the company only

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The spa in Provence has two suites, each featuring a Jacuzzi and outdoor terrace overlooking a garden of cypress and olive trees.

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works with five luxury spas," says Fox. "It is very exclusive and is only present, at this point, in forty spas worldwide. One of the reasons is that the company produces in small quantities to assure its products are of the best quality."

The steady stream of guests who filter through the spa each day to indulge in the vast array of pampering treatments are welcomed warmly by the staff, which is made up of 25 full-time employees and 15 independent contractors. Catering to a mix of business travelers and savvy spa-goers, the spa can accommodate approximately 70 clients each day. With success comes its own set of challenges, and for Fox, one of those challenges is dealing with the limitations presented by the spa's small size. For guests, it may be tearing themselves away from the enchanting spa to explore the City of Light that lies beyond the doors of the legendary George V.

A Spa in Provence

Fans of the French countryside will want to indulge in style at the new Spa at Four Seasons Resort Provence at Terre Blanche, where the scents of lavender, thyme, and mimosa fill the air. Opened in April of last year, the 14-treatment room spa beckons guests with a host of signature treatments inspired by Provence's idyllic setting. The Sugar and White Heather Honey Exfoliation (\$10), 25 minutes) and the Aloe Vera and Lavender Honey Wrap (\$272, 70 minutes) both rely on locally grown and blended ingredients. The spa also offers a host of ESPA treatments and is the first in the area to offer Terraké, a French product line. According to spa director Julien Pradels, ESPA was chosen for its brand recognition, product consistency, and meticulous protocols. Terraké, on the other hand, is a luxe local line that appeals to guests wanting to savor all that is French. It also incorporates nature with its four ranges: earth, water, plants, and air.

One of the spa's most popular treatments is its signature Provençal Escape (\$413, 1 hour 50 minutes), which is an all-encompassing experience that not only cleanses and refreshes the body, but also uplifts and revitalizes

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FOUR SEASONS HOTEL GEORGE V SPA

(Paris)

OWNER: Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (Saudi Arabia)

SPA DIRECTOR: Verena Fox
OPENED: December 1999

CLIENT BASE

59% female
41% male

MOST REPRESENTED COUNTRIES

1. U.S.A.
2. U.K.
3. France

SPACE

8,611 square feet;
11 treatment rooms

OFFERINGS

aromatherapy, body treatments, couples' treatments, eyelash and brow tinting, eyelash extensions, facials, fitness, hair and scalp treatments, hammam, hand and foot treatments, makeup application, massage, guided meditation, nailcare, prenatal services, reflexology, salon services, sunless tanning, waxing, yoga

SIGNATURE SERVICE

A Stroll Through Versailles (\$514, 2 hours 30 minutes), which includes a steamed orange blossom body scrub, a massage with warm shea butter, and a milky facial

MOST EXPENSIVE OFFERING

Vision of Beauty (\$1,480, 7 hours), a full-day package that includes a body exfoliation, massage, body wax, vitamin facial, deluxe manicure and pedicure, haircut, blow-dry, makeup application, and lunch

PRODUCT LINES

Beauté Directe, Carita, Declor, Essie, Leonor Greyl, Sebastian, Soda, Zendals

EQUIPMENT

Life Fitness, Technogym, Spasoft

ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER

Pierre Yves Rochon (Paris)

Set amid the French countryside, the Terre Blanche-based spa charms guests with its bucolic setting.



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the mind. It involves a full-body exfoliation using Camargue sea salts, crushed lavender buds, and Provençal olive oil, followed by a full-body massage using olive oil that has been infused with lavender and rosemary. A blend of white heather honey, aloe vera, and red and white clay is then applied to the body before guests are cocooned in a warm blanket and given a relaxing scalp massage. This indulgent escape concludes with an application of lavender and rose geranium balm. Such services deliver the type of experiences guests are seeking when they visit the spa. According to Pradels, spa-goers want quality treatments, not gimmicks.

With the U.S. and U.K. serving as its two primary markets, the spa caters to a fair number of American and British guests. "The rest of our guests come from other parts of Europe, such as France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland," says Pradels. In the high season, the spa is staffed with 25 full-time and 11 part-time employees. On a busy day, the spa can accommodate approximately 70 treatments.

Included as part of the 14 treatment rooms are two suites, each with a steam room, a Jacuzzi, and an outdoor terrace overlooking a charming garden of cypress and olive trees. Outside of the treatment rooms, guests are free to enjoy the spa's heat experiences, which include a sauna, steam room, laconium, ice fountain, and showers with tropical rain and arctic mist. The spa also features a 20-meter indoor pool and an outdoor Vitality Pool, complete with high-pressure jets, a swan neck fountain, airbed lounges, and reflexology floor jets. Fitness-minded guests will also enjoy the state-of-the-art gym, which includes the Huber, a piece of equipment that helps assess a person's posture, mobility, and balance. With views of the grounds, the fitness studio keeps guests in touch with the Provençal setting even when they're working out indoors.

The spa's Provençal theme also comes into play with the fare served at the spa. Infusion, the spa restaurant, offers light Mediterranean cuisine from the resort's Michelin-starred chef, Philippe Jourdin, who uses fresh regional produce and locally grown herbs. Inspired by the garden and surrounding nature, Jourdin created four fresh lunch menus from which spa-goers may choose. One of the menus, Le Provençal, includes iced tomato-soup with cucumber, pepper, and basil; cold-pressed Provençal vegetable terrine with black olive paste; tagliatelle olive rocket salad with feta cheese; and olive oil ice cream. Spa-goers can indulge in the fresh fare and soak up the sensational setting on the restaurant's terrace, which overlooks the surrounding hilltop villages. It's enough to get spa-goers pondering the possibility of a year in Provence. ■

SPA AT FOUR SEASONS RESORT PROVENCE AT TERRE BLANCHE

(France)

OWNER: Dietmar and Oliver Hopp (Heidelberg, Germany)

SPA DIRECTOR: Julien Pradels

OPENED: April 2007

CLIENT BASE

65% female

45% male

MOST REPRESENTED COUNTRIES

1. U.K.

2. U.S.A.

3. France

SPACE

34,000 square feet:

14 treatment rooms

OFFERINGS

aromatherapy, body treatments, body treatments, chromotherapy, couples' treatments, energy work, eyelash and brow tinting, facials, fitness, hair and scalp treatments, hammam, hand and foot treatments, hydrotherapy, massage, nailcare, nutrition consultation, outdoor treatments, Pilates, prenatal services, Qigong, reflexology, salon services, tai chi, waxing, yoga

Signature Service

The Provençal Escape (\$413, 1 hour 50 minutes), which includes a full-body exfoliation using Camargue sea salts, crushed lavender buds, and Provençal olive oil; a massage; a wrap; and a relaxing scalp massage

Most Expensive Offering

Private Spa Escape (\$1,083, 4 hours) is designed for two and includes full use of the private spa facilities, freshly prepared juices and a fruit platter, and three hours of treatment time

PRODUCT LINES

ESPA, Esthederm, L'anza, Terraké

EQUIPMENT

Oakworks, Sunlab, Technogym, SpaSoft

ARCHITECT

Richard Sansoë (Cannes, France)

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Didier LeFort, Architectes Associés (Boulogne-Billancourt, France)